

THE INDEPENDENT

SATURDAY 26 APRIL 1997

WEATHER: Bright at first, then rainy

(IR65p) 60p

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The Magazine



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Terror threat to election day

Home Office orders big security clampdown

Jason Bennetto, Fran Abrams and David McKitterick

Unprecedented security measures are to be taken on polling day to thwart any attempt by the IRA to disrupt the general election.

Polling stations are to be searched for explosive devices, extra police officers posted, some voters may be searched and returning officers given Home Office advice about terrorist threats for the first time.

The plans emerged on the day two IRA bombs exploded under a electricity pylon close to a motorway and a housing estate north of Birmingham, as part of the wave of mass disruption to Britain's transport systems.

Police believe the IRA was attempting to send a 132,000-volt electricity pylon crashing down on the M6. However, no one was hurt when the devices exploded in the morning rush hour.

The police later said the IRA gave inaccurate coded warnings, further endangering life. The explosions were the third time in eight days the IRA has tried to disrupt the election campaign by creating chaos via a series of coded bomb threats.

The authorities intend to impose the tightest security measures seen this century surrounding a general election on 1 May to avoid further disruption. Among the precautions will be the closing of the Home Office to all but 600 returning officers and a circular telling them how to respond to an attack.

It says: "Provided that an adequate security plan, based on police advice, has been put in place, it should be possible to avoid major disruption, such as evacuation of premises, in almost all circumstances."

"Should a bomb threat be received, the police will assess its credibility and consider, in the light of the security measures in place, what level of response is appropriate."

"Their aim will be to enable the electoral process to continue uninterrupted unless that would pose a clear risk to public safety."

If adds that if voting did have to be abandoned the process could be completed the following day.

Officials said that in the event of any coded threats being received, the presiding officers should arrange for the polling station to be searched again.

Home Office sources maintained that they had no intelligence about a specific IRA threat to polling day and serious disruption was considered unlikely. But they also acknowledged that recent IRA activity had emphasised that the general threat was high.

“We’ve a large number of security measures – this is an enormous operation but we are sure that it will do the job”

Chief constables of Britain's police forces will decide the level of security necessary at each of the 45,000 polling stations and 650 counts. Both the visible and more covert measures are expected to turn polling day into one of the biggest police security operations ever.

David Veness, the Metropolitan Police's assistant commissioner, revealed earlier in the week that police had been planning how to combat any IRA threat on 1 May for a some time.

A police source from a metropolitan force said yesterday: "Polling day is a prime target for the IRA. We have a large number of security measures – some covert – ready to be brought into play. This is an enormous operation, but we're sure it will do the job. There will be more police officers than

usual and if anyone is acting suspiciously they may be searched."

Tickets to some counts have already been restricted and attendants on voting night can expect tight security.

In Northern Ireland itself there has been no recent history of serious disruption on polling days.

Since the early 1980s, when Sinn Fein has contested every election, polling has normally taken place in a trouble-free atmosphere.

One of the principal reasons for this pattern has been the fact that Sinn Fein activists have been anxious to secure as big a turnout as possible of their own supporters.

However, in at least one election in the early 1970s, a wave of IRA bomb attacks took place across Belfast while on the evening of another polling day, a number of Loyalist bombs went off.

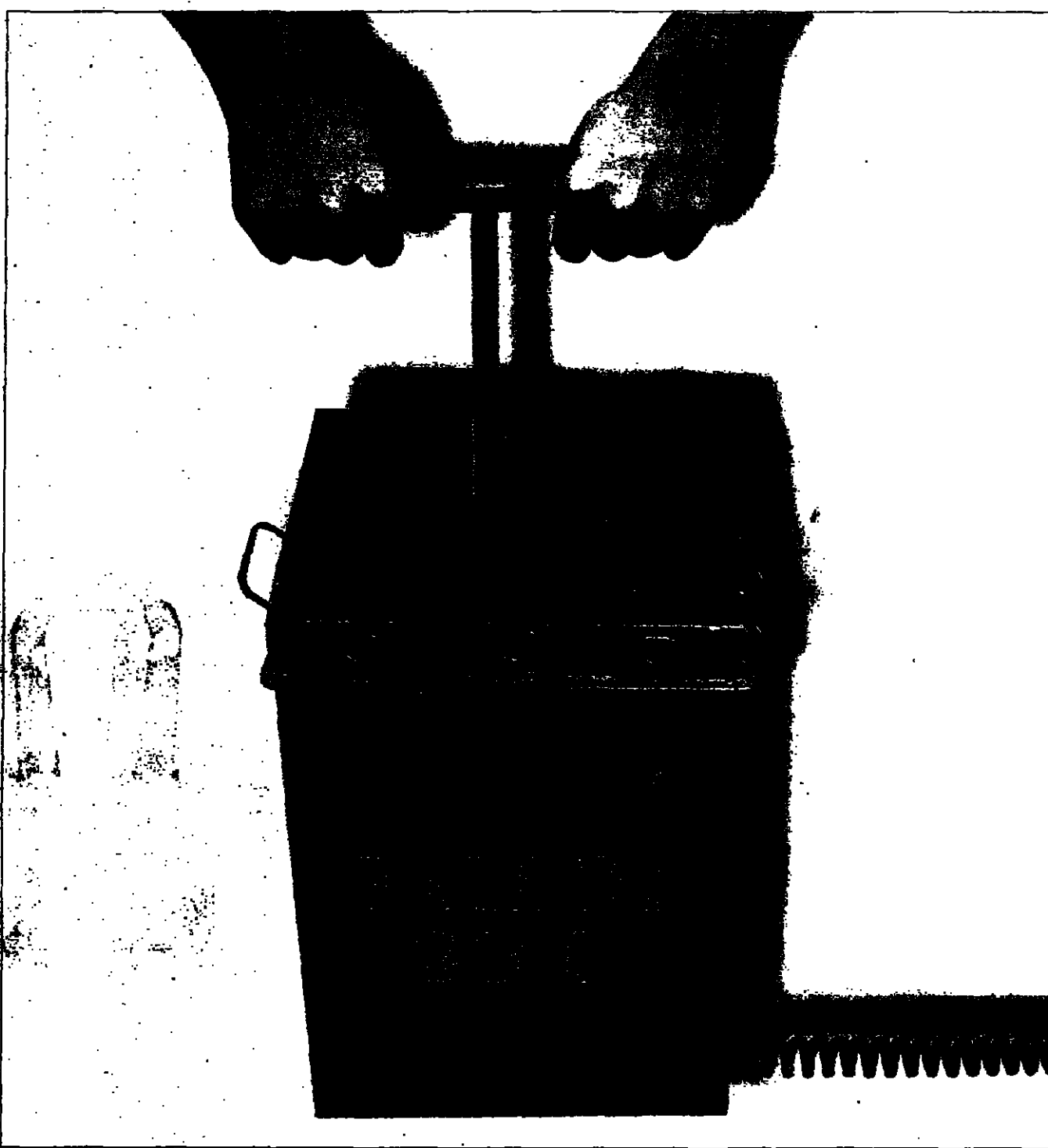
Meanwhile, the emergency services were yesterday having to cope with yet another series of coded bomb threats that crippled the motorway system in the Midlands, and closed Birmingham's main train station and Luton airport. Sections of the M1 and M18 in Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire were also closed for a time.

Commenting on the bombs which were detonated under the electricity pylon, at M6 north-west Midlands, between junctions 10 and 10A of the M6, Chief Inspector Steve Duggan of West Midlands police said: "It's absolutely despicable... It could have resulted in total devastation. If the pylon had fallen in one direction, it would have fallen on to the M6, where drivers at rush hour were going to work."

"If it had fallen the other way, it could have fallen on to flats and residents' property."

The pylon, which was slightly damaged, only supplies a small area with electricity. All the disrupted routes were re-opened by the afternoon with the exception of a section of the M6, near the explosions.

Travel chaos, page 5



JOHN HARRIS/ALISTAIR

SPW/ALISTAIR

Blair wins backing on pensions

Anthony Bevins and Diane Coyle

The Tories yesterday hit Labour with a six-for-four charge that it was planning a £20 cut in the basic pension, after John Major condemned Tony Blair for dragging politics into the gutter, and staked his political career on guaranteeing the state pension.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies, a respected think tank, says in an analysis for *The Independent* that the Conservatives' proposal for a "basic pension plus" does, as Mr Blair claims, amount to the replacement of the guaranteed basic state pension by private provision.

"It is effectively a privatisation of the state pension," according

to Paul Johnson, deputy director of the IFS.

The IFS also pointed out that Labour's retention of the link between pensions and earnings, rather than earnings, will devalue the pension over time. "We are effectively seeing general agreement that the basic pension will be gradually phased out," Mr Johnson said.

Both parties downplayed the fact that anybody who is under 20 now can not count on receiving a state pension that provides enough to live on, no matter who wins the election.

The pattern of pension provision is almost certain to involve two tiers, a basic state pension and a top-up private pension. The amount provided by the state,

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whether under a Labour or Conservative government, will be minimal.

But the political row between the parties overshadowed all else. While Mr Major and Mr Blair battled over the future of the state pension, Peter Lilley,

Secretary of State for Social Security, alleged that Labour's plans for a flexible age of retirement "would cut the basic pension by £20 a week."

Harriet Harman, the Labour spokeswoman, said: "The basic state pension will be paid in full to all who retire at 65." The Labour leader said he was angered by Tory plans to split the country into a "two-tier" society.

"Look at all their proposals," he said at Labour's press conference, "whether it's health, education, pensions; it's all dividing people up."

But Mr Blair was not as angry as Mr Major appeared at his press conference. Challenged by *The Independent* to say how he could guarantee the state pen-

sion with men like Michael Portillo or John Redwood about, he said: "If anybody in my Cabinet actually prevailed in an argument like that, I would not only leave Downing Street, I would call a general election."

"This is just the politics of crude fantasy, scurrilous, unscrupulous campaigning in order to win the votes of people who they wish to frighten... It really does bring politics down into the gutter when people utter charges like this, that they know in their hearts to be false."

Mr Major said: "This wasn't a casual, tossed-off remark by Mr Brown or Mr Blair. This was a carefully calculated, carefully prepared campaign against the

Conservative Party to frighten pensioners into believing that their security and the state retirement pension was at risk."

Certainly, the Labour attack was calculated. *The Independent* was told last night that Mr Blair had made his own assessment of Conservative pension plans when they were first announced in Downing Street in March – but held back his attack for delivery at the height of the election campaign.

Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, last night wrote to Mr Major asking him to confirm that the state pension was to be replaced by "privately purchased provision" and that the scheme might eventually be extended to include older people.

Strange wet stuff falls from the sky

Nicholas Schoon

"Rain stopped play." Sweet words of summer, which we thought we might never hear again. But yesterday eight cricket matches were halted as real water fell from the sky.

The Meteorological Office is confidently forecasting a genuinely wet weekend. And, peering courageously into the future, it predicts unsettled weather in the first half of May, with still more precipitation.

Instead of April turning out to be a freakishly, record-setting dry, it now looks as if the month might merely have far

below average rainfall. Until yesterday, rainfall in England and Wales this April had only averaged 9mm – compared with the long-term average for the entire month of 60mm.

Even less rain had fallen in the nation's most parched regions of East Anglia, the Thames Valley and the South.

But now at last there has been widespread, steady drizzle, which had dumped more than 3mm on London by yesterday afternoon. It was capital's first proper, prolonged rain since 23 March. "Our sensors show it's still raining," said a spokesman indoors at the London Weather

Centre. "We could well go to over 4mm."

So unusual was all this dampness that the Associated Press, the leading US news agency, told the world's media: "It rained in London, Friday. News? You bet," its report began.

England and Wales have had their driest 24 successive months since reliable records began just over 200 years ago. There was well below average rainfall in February, but precipitation in January and March was exceptionally low for the time of year.

Much more is required to

avert the threat of hosepipe and sprinkler bans across large parts of southern and eastern England. From now until the autumn, the ground is too dry and evaporation too swift for surface and underground water resources to be replenished by rain. But any rain that falls cuts the demand from gardeners and farmers, helping to ease out supplies.

"This week's rainfall is unlikely to have any real effect on supplies; what we really need is a great deal of consistent rainfall," said Jane Farncombe of Southern Water, which still has a long-running hosepipe ban in East and West Sussex. "We

have already experienced one surge of demand in April due to the warm weather."

Flows in every one of the Environment Agency's 35 indicator rivers are well below average for the time of year. In most, the flow is less than a third of what is normal for late April.

If Labour wins the general election next Thursday, it has promised to crack down on the water companies, demanding that they speed up their programmes to reduce mains leakage and repair customer's leaking pipes and taps free of charge.

Weather, Long Weekend, page 31

An appeal from Tony Blair

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news

significant shorts

Europe stifles hope for trade in British BSE-free cattle

Hopes that British farmers with healthy, BSE-free, herds could be exempted from the European Union's beef ban were dashed yesterday after Brussels challenged the basis of proposals framed by Douglas Hogg, the agriculture minister.

Mr Hogg submitted a blueprint to Brussels last month detailing how Britain would meet EU conditions for the removal of the ban on exports of beef from BSE-free herds. But, in a letter to Mr Hogg, Franz Fischler and Emma Bonino, EU commissioners for agriculture and food safety, query the ability of the British authorities to guarantee that certified BSE-free herds can be properly traced. Exports from Northern Ireland could be envisaged, the commissioners suggest, since Ulster already has a well-established computerised cattle-movement database. A commission spokesman stressed yesterday that a formal decision on the certified herds scheme would be taken only at the end of May. *Katherine Butler*

Missing child turns up in Holland

A two-year-old girl snatched yesterday morning from outside her nursery school has been found, later the same day, in Holland.

Marwa Darwish and her Lebanese natural father, Ahmed, were traced to Schiphol Airport near Amsterdam by Dutch authorities, Scotland Yard said. The child was abducted when her foster father was hit over the head from behind and pushed to the ground outside the Portman Family Centre in Marylebone, central London.

Youths jailed for victimising elderly

Two teenage boys who burgled the elderly and disabled were jailed for three and five years yesterday after a crime wave which saw them arrested 115 times in 30 months.

Daniel Storey, (left) aged 14, and Daniel Marsh, (right) aged 17, chose "soft" targets, including a 72-year-old man whom they



robbed of his Christmas presents, to feed their drug addiction. Judge David Selwood, at Portsmouth Crown Court, lifted their right to anonymity on the grounds the public had a right to know who had committed the "catalogue of offences". *Simon Reeve*

Three years for fallen SAS hero

A former SAS hero, trapped by an undercover police officer into illegally supplying a machine-gun and highly destructive dum-dum bullets, was yesterday jailed for three years.

Robert Scott, 49, who distinguished himself in battle zones around the world, hoped the deal would result in £100,000 of legitimate business. But Judge Derek Imman at Middlesex Guildhall Crown Court told the twice-married father, who was arrested shortly after last year's Dunblane tragedy, that he must have been aware of the danger in which he was putting society. A second defendant, David Spencer, 38, also a former soldier, who supplied the Vectra M4 sub-machine pistol, received an 18-month sentence. A third man, ex-M16 officer Christopher Hale, 57, provided a .32 calibre Astra revolver and 18 bullets at Scott's request, and will be sentenced next week.

E.coli screening in Highlands

Health officials in Scotland are screening the family and friends of a six-year-old girl who has contracted the *E. coli* 0157 bacterium.

The four teachers and 92 pupils of Hill of Fearn Primary School in Easter Ross, where the girl is a pupil, have also been given advice on hygiene. A spokesman for Highland Council said: "We have been advised there is no public health issue involved." The girl is being looked after at her home and is not ill, he added.

people



Weldon: 'All revolutions become the Establishment' (Photograph: Glyn Griffiths)

Fay Weldon turns from feminism to boy power

The novelist Fay Weldon has called on feminists to become masculinist and promote the self-esteem of little boys.

Weldon, 65, was speaking following the announcement of a new TV drama *Big Women* to be shown on Channel 4. The series tells the story of a feminist publishing house over 25 years from the 1970s to the 1990s. It shows heady idealism giving way to disillusion particularly among men.

According to Weldon, "The serial is going to be very sexy but not in a salacious way. Lots of naked women running around in the woods communing with the Mother Goddess."

Weldon, writer of *The Lives And Loves Of A She-Devil*, said no one can accuse her of going back on her feminist principles.

"I will get stick from all sides! But I can't have deserted because I was never there. There is no headquarters, you know."

"Our duty now is to become masculinist. It is time we looked after the self-esteem of the little boys," she declared.

"Feminism was a revolution that happened. It was

an amazing movement that worked. Everything is completely different to what it was 25 years ago."

"But what happened with all revolutions is they become the Establishment."

Women's problem has become how to find a man when do you get the opportunity and how do you find the time? Because nobody now is good enough for them."

A Channel 4 spokesman confirmed yesterday that the *Big Women* series would be based on the *Virago* Press.

"It will be a satirical look at feminism over the last quarter of a century," he said. The producer will be Tariq Ali and shooting will start in July. The cast has yet to be confirmed.

Channel 4's drama plans also include an adaptation of Anthony Powell's *A Dance To The Music Of Time* and an adaptation of Francis Ford Coppola's classic studies thriller *Melissa*, updated by Alan Bleasdale. Jennifer Ehle, who played Elizabeth in *Pride And Prejudice*, will play Melissa. Julie Walters and Bill Paterson will also star.

David Lester

briefing

HEALTH

Contraceptive pill safe for most women

Contraceptive pills do not increase the risk of heart attack in healthy women, according to a World Health Organisation study.

A team of researchers led by Professor Neil Poulter, of University College London, said heart attacks were "extremely rare" in women under 35 who did not smoke and used oral contraceptives. They added in a paper published in the *Lancet*: "The risk is likely to be even lower if blood pressure is screened before, and presumably during, oral contraceptive use."

However, the team found that use of the pill did slightly increase the risk of heart attack among women with known risk factors, like smoking and being overweight. It also caused a small increase in risk among those who had not been effectively screened before the pills were prescribed, particularly for blood pressure.

The study collected information on 368 women aged 20 to 44 who had heart attacks from 21 research centres in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America.

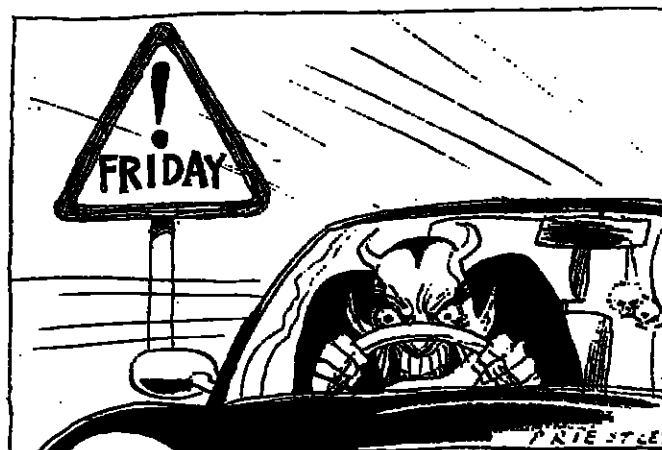
MOTORING

Road rage 'worst on Fridays'

Road rage is at its worst on Fridays because motorists gradually build up their aggression and stress levels during the week, it was claimed yesterday.

AXA Insurance said almost one in five of the 30,000 insurance claims for vehicle damage and accidents last year involved incidents on Fridays. The company also found that 40 per cent of the 520 drivers it quizzed admitted behaving aggressively on the road when feeling stressed or tired.

The company said its research earlier this month suggested that drivers get increasingly aggressive and careless as the week goes by, "culminating in Friday mayhem". Andy Tait, head of the firm's motor division, said: "Our 24-hour claims helpline becomes inundated with calls on Fridays. This is more than twice the amount which we receive for Sundays. We worry that UK drivers might start to follow the trend set by French and Italian drivers, who go mad leaving Paris and Rome for the weekend."



EMPLOYMENT

Courts service accused of sex bias

Women and ethnic minorities are being denied top jobs in the magistrates court service, according to a survey which revealed that 93 per cent of senior positions are held by men.

Only seven per cent of the top grades of Justices' Chief Executives and Justices' Clerks - 16 out of 214 - are women, and none are black.

Rosie Eagleson, general secretary of the magistrates' union, the Association of Magisterial Officers, said: "It is pretty astonishing that this is happening in 1997. We are extremely disappointed and increasingly angry with the response of the Lord Chancellor's Department in the face of these latest, and apparently damning, statistics. Urgent and practical measures must be taken to establish equality of opportunity for all those working in the magistrates' courts service. This is an issue which cannot be swept under the carpet as it undermines the credibility of the local justice system."

The results were part of an ethnic and gender monitoring survey for 1996, carried out by the magistrates' courts group of the Lord Chancellor's Department. It showed that while 68 per cent of all staff employed in the service were female, 68 per cent of these were employed in low-paid, clerical and administrative jobs.

ASTRONOMY

New planet found in star's orbit

American scientists have boosted the notion that many more stars in the galaxy may have Earth-sized planets orbiting them, after finding evidence for a planet the size of Jupiter around a star just 50 light years away.

Though it is almost certainly too hot to sustain life, and is not the closest to Earth of the extrasolar planets to be found, it does offer fresh evidence for how such star and planet systems form. The planet was found by detecting tiny variations in the motion of the star, Rho Coronae Borealis in the Northern Crown constellation, from an observatory at Mt Hopkins in Arizona.

Last year other astronomers reckoned they had found two extrasolar planets around a star just eight light years away from Earth. Both of those were also reckoned to be the size of Jupiter. "This discovery helps show that giant planets like Jupiter may be reasonably common around ordinary stars," said Robert Noyes, one of the team.

"It is exciting to think that there may be many smaller planets much more like the Earth in orbit around these stars, as in our own solar system."

Charles Arthur, Science Editor

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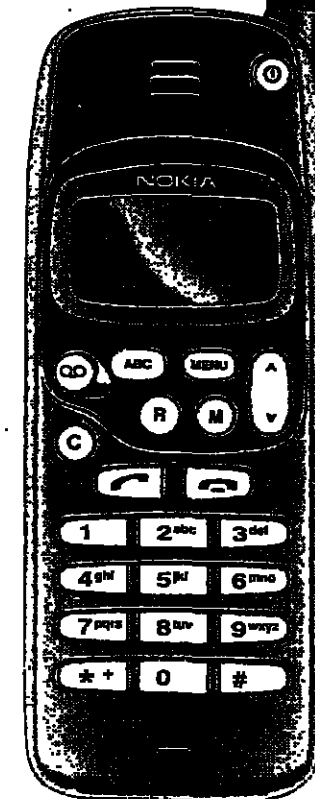
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Top scientist targeted in animal protest

A leading neuroscientist has been targeted by anti-vivisection campaigners who are planning a demonstration outside his house today.

The home of professor Colin Blakemore, president-in-waiting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, is being used as a meeting point for animal rights protesters who will then go on an "Animal Freedom Tour".

Professor Blakemore, who is out of the country, is concerned for the safety of his wife and family. He said last night: "I'm afraid they'll burn my house down. I really live in fear of my home being destroyed." He said there has been a resurgence of attacks on him, with the latest being focused on his home.

The group behind the protest, Animal Liberation, have said in their flyers advertising the event that they are planning to visit several "animal abuse establishments in and around Oxford". A similar protest



last Saturday in Herefordshire ended in clashes between protesters and police.

Professor Blakemore (pictured), of Oxford University, has been a frequent target for animal rights campaigners. Two years ago, at Christmas, his children handed a package, sent to his home by protesters, which later turned out to be a bomb. He has been subjected to death threats, warned that his three children would be kidnapped, and had his car doused with paint strippers, causing several thousand pounds worth of damage.

Colin Blackstock

Smoking rebel vows to defy ban

Sixty-day smoker Peter Boddington said yesterday that he would rather go to jail than obey a High Court injunction banning him from lighting up on the London to Brighton train.

His rebellion came after Connex South Central, whose BR predecessors prosecuted him in the criminal courts, succeeded in a civil action aimed at ending the commuter's habit of smoking in the buffet car of their trains where there is now a complete ban.

The injunction was imposed until Mr Boddington's challenge to his £10 fine for smoking is either heard or rejected by the House of Lords. Mr Boddington, the owner of Tooting Market in south London, is now standing as an independent parliamentary candidate in Tooting, and says in his election literature that a vote for him will "help stop people being sent to prison by the French for smoking on British trains".

Internet boy whose game was for real

A 12-year-old Texas boy is being hailed as an Internet hero for summoning help for a woman seriously ill in Finland.

At first, Sean Redden said, he could not tell whether the "sob" and "pain" messages flashing across his screen were real or part of an Internet game he had logged on to. In the end he took them

seriously and his actions, with help from his mother, sheriff's dispatchers, international paramedics, may have saved the life of Tarja Laitinen, 20, a business student in Kerava, Finland.

Sean was playing a character in a chat-room, a cyber fantasy world where visitors play make-believe. A new character entered,

saying she was an asthmatic who had stayed late in the computer lab, got locked in and was having trouble breathing. She gave her name and address. Sean's mother, called rescue personnel, and an ambulance was dispatched. Interpol later confirmed that Ms Laitinen was all right.

AP - Denton, Texas

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BBC's brightest set to head C4

Rob Brown
Media Editor

The contest to succeed Michael Grade as chief executive of Channel 4, an appointment expected to be made at a board meeting on Monday, appears to have boiled down to a two-horse race between one of the BBC's top television executives, Michael Jackson, and Channel 4's director of programmes, John Willis.

If the youthful Mr Jackson gets the job, it will be hard for Mr Willis to stick around at the station he has been with since day one. Colleagues expect him to quit if he is passed over for the post. He may even cross over to the BBC.

Many of Mr Jackson's col-

leagues at the Beeb are bracing themselves for that eventuality. He has described the Channel 4 chief executive post as the best job in British broadcasting.

Rumours have been sweeping through the corridors at Television Centre since last Tuesday, when the director of television and controller of BBC1 suddenly cancelled a walkabout in the entertainment department for a serious discussion at Broadcasting House with director-general John Birt.

Mr Birt has dismissed suggestions that he is about to lose one of the brightest minds in the corporation, and a possible future DG. He told one reporter that for Mr Jackson to move from his current job at the BBC (Director of television and

controller of BBC1) to Channel 4 would be "like you going off to edit the *New Statesman*".

It could be that Mr Birt has held onto the wunderkind of White City by offering him an irresistible package of promises. But Mr Jackson has just embarked on a plum job, so it is doubtful he can be offered much more at this stage.

Speculation that he is set to defect to the commercial sector has risen since it emerged last week that BBC's director of programmes, Alan Yentob, was out of the running. Although he has no real experience in the commercial world, the way for the appointment of a creative leader was paved by the recent decision to promote David Scott from finance director to

Channel 4's managing director. But it will be a major blow for the station's programming supremo, John Willis, who has been described by Channel 5's chief executive David Elstein as the "unsung hero" of Channel 4.

Mr Willis would hate to lose out to a younger man he once branded a "copycat criminal". That was when Mr Jackson was controller of BBC2 and, allegedly, stealing ideas from Channel 4. Mr Jackson hit back at that time, describing Channel 4 as a "lager channel" and arguing that a "sapping of originality" had resulted from a "pursuit of demographics" - in particular, young, lager-drinking, upwardly-mobile men.

Mr Jackson pointed to *The Gilt Show* as an example of "putting

packaging before programming, treating the audience simply as categories of consumers".

In contrast, BBC2, he suggested, challenged its audience by "reflecting the more fluid social realities of the Nineties - the awareness that Essex Man may be curious about Cezanne, that Sussex Woman may have hankers after Oasis".

Mr Jackson made life difficult for Channel 4 schedulers during his time in charge of BBC2. He broadened its appeal, particularly in peak time, with everything from fantasy football to *Our Friends in the North*. He axed the Late Show and gave the network its first continuous drama series, *This Life*, about a group of sex-obsessed young lawyers sharing a London flat.

Interestingly, Michael Grade performed virtually the same role that Mr Jackson performs at the Beeb, before he took over at Channel 4 in 1987. Because of his populist and flamboyant image, Mr Grade's appointment unnerved many at Channel 4. Yet he quickly established himself as the Face of Four and many Channel 4 staffers were devastated when he announced on 27 January that he would quit in July.

The horror which greeted Michael Grade's move to Channel 4 would repeat itself if the board opted this time for his old LWT chum Greg Dyke, who is believed to covet the post. Mr Jackson has more at stake, and no one will be outraged if he is named as Channel 4's new boss.



Michael Jackson: Wunderkind
Photograph: Edward Sykes

...but backlash against the box starts here

Nicole Veash

The backlash against television started in the Wilson household when they banished the square box to a corner of the attic, where it sat gathering dust for more than a decade.

A few years ago, they decided to be rid of it permanently, mainly because it was never used and was taking up too much space.

The family, who live in East Grinstead, Sussex, have now given their support to Turn Off TV Week, a campaign launched by anti-television campaigners, White Dot.

Sarah Wilson, 44, a music teacher and mother to three teenage children, said when they chose to turn off their television they were rewarded with an enriched family life.

"When the children were quite small my husband and I decided we didn't want them watching television because it is habit-forming and they would

have assumed it was a expected part of family life," she said.

"I don't think we have replaced the television, we are not rushing around all the time trying to fill the gaps in our life. It is just that we live by a different, more moderate tempo."

The Wilsons are used to people thinking that life without television is somewhat odd. But they dismiss suggestions that their children are bored or in some way deprived. "Each of the children has had the time to develop a musical talent and I'm not quite sure how we would fit TV into our life now," says Mrs Wilson, whose husband, Chris, a business communications manager in London.

"I would like to think that if people switched off their television, even for just one week, that they would see how much more there is to life beyond *Neighbours*. Family life is being eroded and one of the contributing factors is television."

This week was officially designated Turn Off TV Week by David Burke, a computer programmer from Hove, Sussex, and founder of White Dot, after witnessing the success of a similar crusade in the United States, where a reputed 3.5 million viewers hit the off button last year. "I think people who watch a lot of TV don't realise how much it dominates their life because they are plugged into it all the time," he said.

"They start replacing reality with escapism. For example, they think the actors in the soap *Friends* are in fact their friends."

Christine Airey, a shop assistant and her husband Mike, a policeman, of Brighton, have followed suit. The couple have four children, two of whom still live at home. The family disposed of the television a while ago, but somehow their children managed to sneak it back.

Mrs Airey, 45, said: "I would like to get rid of it permanently, but there is the rest of the family to consider."



The Flying Hamburger: German hover-train will be world's fastest at 300mph

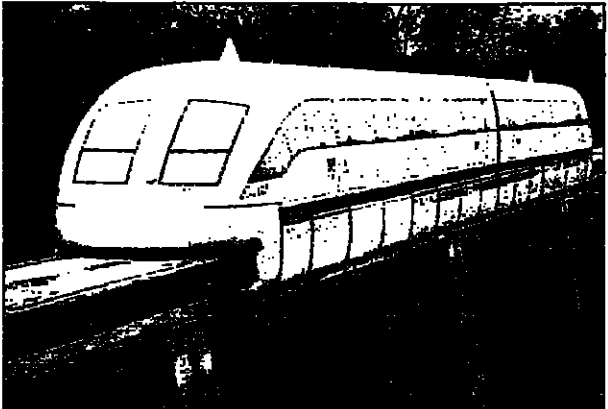
Imre Karacs
Bonn

The German government yesterday gave the green light to the world's fastest train, which is designed to glide from Hamburg to Berlin at speeds of up to 300mph.

Work on the Transrapid project, financed jointly by taxpayers and private enterprise, is due to begin next year, with the trains scheduled to make their first journey in 2005. They will cover the 185-mile distance, with a stop in Schwerin, in less than an hour. The train will herald a new age of the railway, levitating on a magnetic cushion half an inch above the specially constructed track. The light-weight vehicles will dispense with wheels, traditional brakes, friction and noise.

Such systems already operate on short stretches around the world, but the Hamburg-Berlin line will be the first to apply the technology at a distance long enough to swamp other means of transport. The government and the German companies pioneering Transrapid hope their courage will be rewarded with export orders world-wide.

But although several countries, notably Brazil, the United States, Australia and China, have expressed interest in magnetic levitation (Maglev) trains, no firm order has been re-



The Transrapid will cover the 185 miles from Hamburg to Berlin - with a stop - in less than an hour

ceived. The incalculable revenue from exports has long been the subject of dispute in Germany, following realisation that Transrapid will not make money at home for a long time.

Indeed, yesterday's pledge of funds by the Transport Minister, Matthias Wissmann, was precipitated by the withdrawal of three large German construction companies from the project. The estimated cost of the project has gone up by 10 per cent of original calculations, while revenue forecasts have been revised downwards.

According to the latest figures, the government will invest DM1.1bn (about £2.1bn), while the private sector will put up

DM3.7bn. Annual profit is currently projected at just under DM1bn by 2010. Opponents say that is still pie in the sky, but the government commitment seems to ensure that the project will be realised. "I feel more optimistic than ever in saying that Transrapid will come," Mr Wissmann said yesterday.

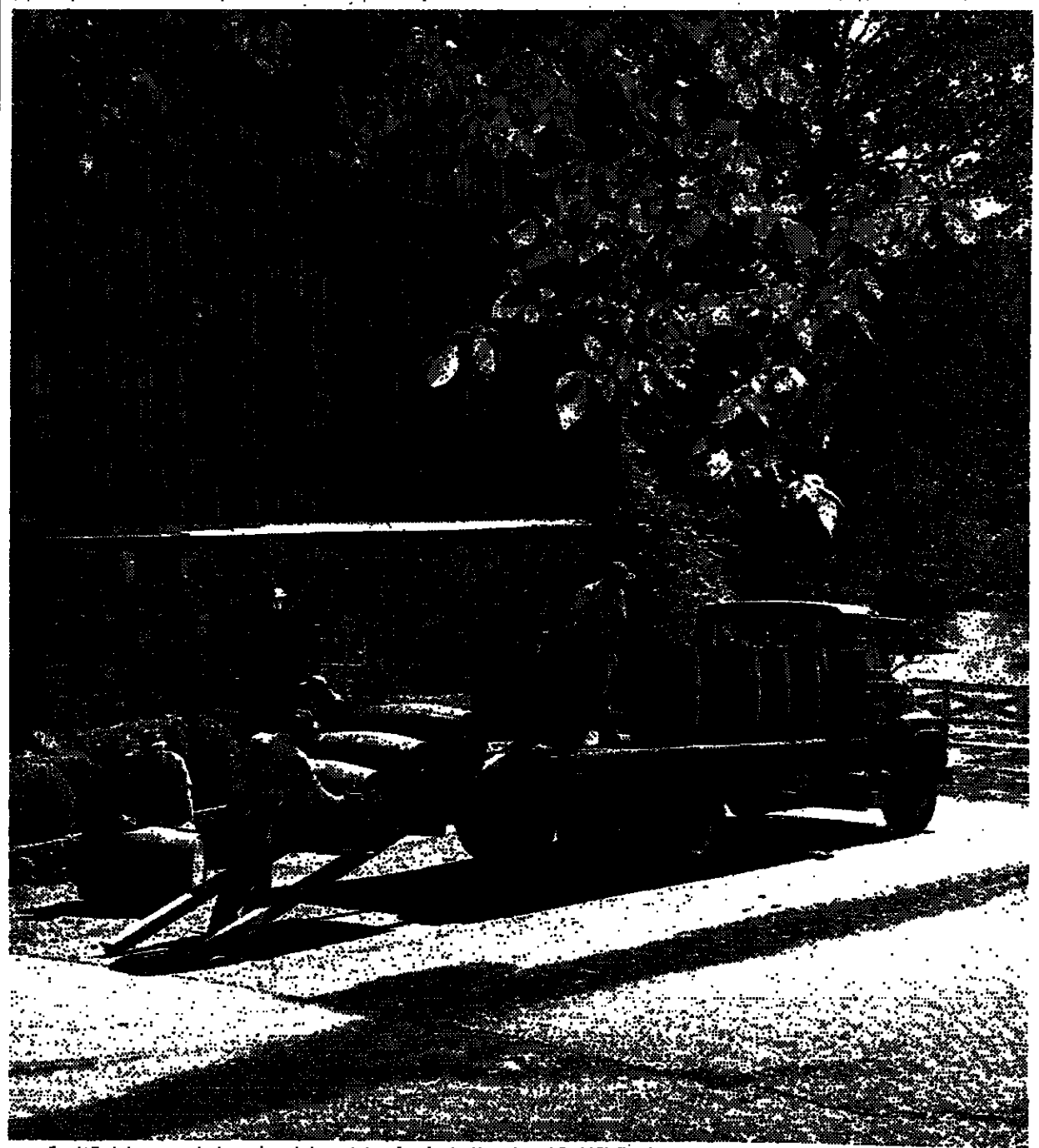
Money apart, Transrapid still faces opposition on other fronts. The Greens deplore the elevated track's impact on the landscape, and its higher energy use than traditional trains. Resistance is strongest in Schleswig-Holstein, the *Land* along a section of the track, whose government of Social Democrats and Greens is still

fighting a rearguard battle, and can delay the planning stages. Villages along the way have found a powerful ally in the Bismarck family, whose wooded estate lies in the path of progress.

Their power of obstruction is more than balanced, however, by the Transrapid lobby. The state railway company, and the private concerns Thyssen, Siemens and Adtranz have a vested interest in milking their investment. Chancellor Helmut Kohl and even the Finance Minister, Theo Waigel, are Maglev enthusiasts, and all but one of the regions affected support the line.

All arguments have, in any case, been outweighed by considerations of prestige. Germany was a late entrant to the high-speed rail race, and felt humiliated when France's TGV conquered rich foreign markets, rendering the rival German technology obsolete. Transrapid is meant to be the revenge, and something more. It is set to become a national symbol, the crowning glory of Germany's new capital, its space-age terminus by the Reichstag, the most important hub in Europe.

There are plans to take the line further east, to Warsaw and beyond. That may seem an implausible dream now, but that's what they used to say about the futuristic blueprints of the Hamburg-Berlin shuttle.



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IN TOMORROW'S
INDEPENDENT

Five sections for the very best in news, features, sport, business, travel, property, and money

RIVER
CAFE
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BOOK
TWO

BRITAIN'S BEST
RECIPES

Our exclusive serialisation of the *River Cafe Cook Book Two* this week offers new ways with pasta, polenta, and risotto, and a chance to win a luxury holiday in Tuscany

PLUS:

ELECTION
SPECIAL

Jan Jack with Tony Blair and Rian Malan with John Major

DAVID AND
JONATHAN

The Dimbleby brothers go head-to-head

CURRIE WITH
SPICE

Pop star wannabe Debbie Currie, daughter of MP Edwina

CATCH UP ...

with the man who runs six marathons (a day)

WE HATE WORK

Why offices are like school ... only worse

SPECIAL OFFER

Get the 10s for just 50p. See the voucher on page 2 today

IT IS. ARE YOU?

news

Noddy comes to play for his creator's centenary



Noddy's new friend: Four-year-old Jake Birch plays with some of the Noddy goods on show at the London Toy and Model Museum. An exhibition of works by Enid Blyton - to mark the centenary of the author's birth - runs from today until 21 September at the Paddington gallery. Photograph: Nicola Firtz

Director denies mistreatment at care home

Louise Jury

A director of homes for mentally disabled people accused of ill-treating residents told yesterday how she left the homes and never went back after the allegations were made.

Angela Rowe was now being treated for depression and anorexia. Kingston Crown Court, Surrey, was told. Jonathan Caplan, QC, for the prosecution, said the homes, Stoke Place Mansion House and Stoke Green House in Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire, were more like an army camp than residential centres.

Mrs Rowe, with former members of staff Desmond Tully and Lorraine Field, denies claims by other former workers and relatives that residents were ill-treated.

The jury was directed by Mr Justice Baker not to be further concerned with four of the 16



Angela Rowe: Accused of making resident eat outside

charges. They were two charges of ill-treating residents made against Mrs Rowe and one charge of ill-treatment by Mr Tully and a similar charge against Mrs Field.

This leaves Mrs Rowe, 39, whose last given address was in Windsor, Berkshire, facing two counts of ill-treating residents at the homes run by her and her late husband, Gordon, between 1983 and 1993. She is also accused of two counts of wilfully neglecting residents.

Mr Tully, 33, of Exeter, Devon, and Ms Field, 42, of Stoke Poges, each now face four counts of ill-treating residents at the homes.

The court has heard that if Gordon Rowe had not committed suicide last year, he would have faced charges as being "principally responsible" for what allegedly happened in the homes. Opening the case for the defence, Stephen Kramer, QC, for Mrs Rowe, said they

were "fencing at shadows, because what is alleged is alleged over such a long period and so long ago."

He said Mrs Rowe denied allegations of ill-treating a resident, who had Down's Syndrome, by forcing her to eat outside, even in the cold, and of pulling the hair of another resident. She also denied there were inadequate toiletries and toilet paper for the residents.

The court heard that Mrs Rowe, one of a family of 16, first met Rowe when she was 10 and he was mental-welfare officer for her father. When Rowe set up a home for the mentally disabled in Somerset in 1979, he phoned Mrs Rowe, then 22, and asked her to join him as house-keeper. In 1983 she moved with him to Buckinghamshire, where they ran Stoke Place Mansion House and then later Stoke Green House. They married in 1989.

Mrs Rowe was a director of the management company, Longcare, with 40 per cent of the shares, and was on the certificate of registration with Buckinghamshire County Council for Stoke Green House. But, questioned by Mr Kramer, Mrs Rowe said she knew nothing about what being a director meant and had not even known until coming to court that she was named in the registration. She had had nothing to do with the business of the homes or with the education and training programmes but was, as in Somerset, a "glorified house-keeper."

Haughey pressured to help cash inquiry

Alan Murdoch
Dublin

The former taoiseach, Charles Haughey, is being invited to attend the payments-to-politicians tribunal or have legal representation when it resumes on Monday to argue whether conversations he had with a lawyer for supermarket magnate Ben Dunne should be made public. The tribunal heard earlier this week that Mr Haughey secretly received £1.3m from Mr Dunne while he was taoiseach between 1987 and 1991.

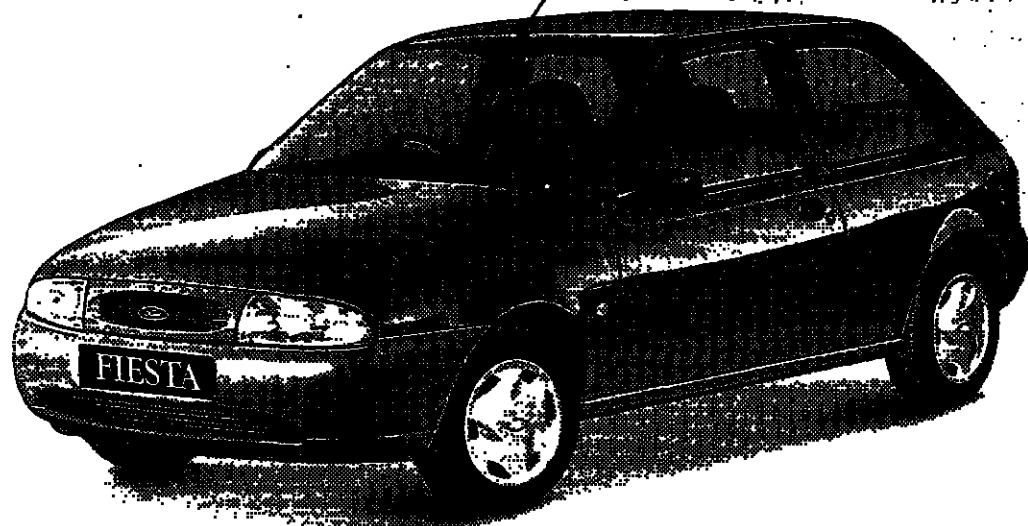
Proceedings at the Dublin Castle tribunal were suspended in some confusion yesterday when Noel Smyth, solicitor for Mr Dunne, revealed that he had had discussions with the politi-

cian at his Kinsealy mansion which he had withheld from his earlier statement of evidence.

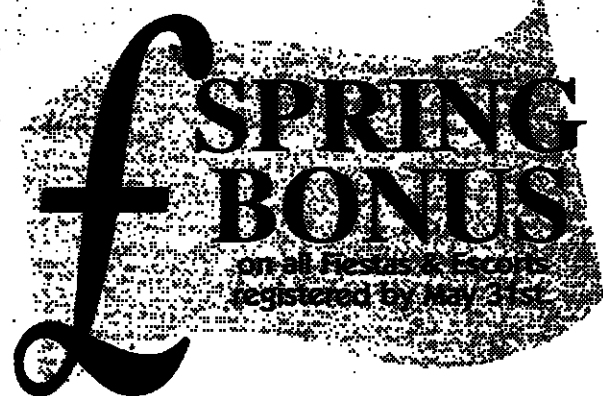
He said he had not disclosed them because he had been asked as a lawyer to meet Mr Haughey privately. Mr Smyth said Mr Haughey had imparted information to him as a solicitor. "I am taking the view therefore that unless directed by this tribunal to relate that information I would not give [it]."

After taking advice on whether to direct Mr Smyth to answer questions on the conversations, the tribunal chairman, Mr Justice McCracken, said Mr Haughey should have the opportunity to appear and say whether he felt the facts of the talks should remain confidential. Saturday Story, page 20

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news

'Independent' cleared of Iraq arms trial contempt

Kathy Marks

The *Independent* was yesterday cleared of contempt of court in an action brought by the Attorney-General, Sir Nicholas Lyell, after the newspaper reproduced documents connected to an arms-to-Iraq trial.

The Lord Chief Justice, Lord Bingham, said the publication of two extracts from the documents did not constitute contempt, nor had there been any intention by the newspaper to interfere with the course of justice.

The documents were central to the quashing of the convictions of four men who ran Ordtech, an arms technology company. The Court of Appeal ruled in November 1995 that they had not received a fair trial because the

papers - which suggested the Government turned a blind eye to exports of arms to Iraq - had been withheld from the defence.

Reporting the outcome of the appeal, *The Independent* reproduced fragments of an intelligence report and a Foreign Office memorandum. The Attorney-General argued that this was in contempt of a court order that said the documents should be disclosed only for the purposes of the appeal. He applied to have the newspaper fined and sought jail sentences for Ian Hargreaves, its former editor, and Chris Blackhurst, its former Westminster correspondent.

However, Lord Bingham, in a judgment handed down yesterday after a hearing earlier this week, said there had not been

a "significant and adverse effect on the administration of justice".

He went on: "Recognising that the restraints upon freedom of expression should be no wider than are truly necessary in a democratic society, we do not accept that conduct by a third party which is inconsistent with a court order in only a trivial or technical way should expose a party to conviction or contempt."

Philip Havers QC, counsel for the Attorney-General, had submitted that although the court order was directed at the four men and their lawyers, it was also binding on third parties such as the media.

Lord Bingham noted that both Mr Hargreaves, now editor of the *New Statesman*, and Mr Blackhurst, now assistant

editor of the *Independent on Sunday*, had denied knowledge of the order. "We are in no doubt that their denials are truthful and accurate," he said.

However, there was uncertainty, he said, about whether David Hellyer, the reporter who was in court for the appeal judgment, had reported to his superiors an exchange in which the prosecution counsel reminded the appeal judges about the existence of the order.

"According to his affidavit, he reported the exchange which had taken place in court," Lord Bingham said. "There is, however, considerable doubt whether he reported what counsel said at the conclusion of the judgment, including the reference to the order of 17 July, and

on balance we are inclined to think that he did not."

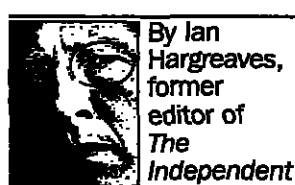
He said that journalists had made "a bona fide attempt to ascertain whether there was any restriction on publication of the documents. We conclude that Mr Hargreaves believed that the newspaper could properly publish extracts from documents quoted in the judgment of the court without infringing any order it had made."

Mr Hargreaves said afterwards: "This action by the Attorney-General was an attempt to narrow ... the freedom that journalists have to report contentious legal matters." He said he believed that courts would have to be much clearer in future about what restrictions they intended to impose on reporting.

Issue at heart of our secret society

Journalists don't often win battles in court. Still less, battles against the Attorney-General adjudicated by the Lord Chief Justice, whose ruling yesterday will make journalists just a little more confident about reporting what goes on in and around the courts.

The case arose from the *Independent's* publication in November, 1995 of documents involved in the arms-to-Iraq scandal. Four men from a com-



By Ian Hargreaves, former editor of *The Independent*

pany called Ordtech had been found guilty of illegal arms exports to Iraq, even though papers concealed by ministers through their use of Public Interest Im-

munity Certificates would have revealed that they committed their crimes with the connivance of the authorities.

It took the intervention of Lord Chief Justice Taylor to prise these documents into the appeal process; their revelation led directly to the men's successful appeal, which concluded on 7 November, 1995. That same day, some of these contested documents fell into the hands of the *Independent* and we

reproduced snatches of them in reporting the outcome of the appeal the next day.

Lord Chief Justice Taylor reported our behaviour to the Attorney-General, who prosecuted the newspaper, myself and Christopher Blackhurst, the reporter involved, for criminal contempt. Our actions, he charged, "set at naught the basis upon which the Court of Appeal had made available the documents." A court order in-

structing the appellants not to use the papers for any purpose other than their appeal also meant this newspaper was not allowed to use them to inform its readers. Our argument was that Lord Taylor had not made clear he intended this order to apply to the press, even though we made every effort to check his position following the end of the appeal.

Ian Hargreaves is editor of the *New Statesman*



Full stretch: Stuart Cassidy lifting Doreen Russell in rehearsal of Glen Tetley's new ballet *Amores*, which opens at Covent Garden next Wednesday. Photograph: Laurie Lewis

Ballet's grand old man returns after 17 years

David Lister
Arts News Editor

The Royal Ballet will next week stage a new work by Glen Tetley, described as the last "grand old man" of international ballet. It will be the first work that the 72-year-old American choreographer, with more than 70 ballets behind him, has created in this country for 17 years.

The new abstract ballet, entitled *Amores*, will star Doreen Russell and Stuart Cassidy. It will form part of a triple bill which will be the last full programme the Royal Ballet presents at Covent Garden in central London before the company goes on a major tour of Japan.

A Royal Ballet spokeswoman said that Tetley had "gone out to create a ballet which stretched six of the country's finest dancers to the limit".

The remainder of the triple bill will now take on a strange

aspect following a dispute between the Royal Ballet and the Balanchine Trust in New York. The Royal Ballet had advertised that it was staging, along with *Amores*, two ballets by Balanchine, *Apollo* and *Symphony in C*.

However, the trust that controls performances of *Apollo* has refused The Royal Ballet permission to stage the piece unless it has prior casting approval. The trust wanted to watch the dress rehearsal of *Apollo* and then make its decision, only hours before curtain up on the first night next Wednesday.

The Royal Ballet director Sir Anthony Dowell has ruled out such a last-minute arrangement and the company has cancelled its plans to stage *Apollo*, which will be replaced by one of the Royal Ballet's well-known works, *The Judas Tree*, choreographed by the late Sir Kenneth Macmillan. The company is hav-

ing to contact every ticket holder to inform them of the change.

It is understood the Balanchine Trust was concerned that the Royal Ballet star Irek Mukhammedov might be "too muscular" for the lead role in *Apollo*.

To add to the oddity of the situation, another Balanchine work, *Symphony in C*, will still be performed as part of the triple bill next Wednesday. That ballet is controlled by a separate trust, which has no worries about the suitability of the Royal Ballet to perform the work.

The Royal Ballet dancer Adam Cooper, who is leaving the company, opened in Los Angeles last night in the all-male *Swan Lake* presented by Adventures in Motion Pictures. The radical reinterpretation of the work, which played at a theatre in the West End of London last year, received huge advance sales at the start of its United States tour.

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Dixons

There's a great deal going on

April 26 1997

THE INDEPENDENT election '97

Tory election posters leaked to Labour

Christian Wolmar

Mole sent copies of advertisements to Millbank in brown paper envelopes

In the continuing tit-for-tat war over leaks from each others' camps, Labour has admitted receiving advance copies of all Tory advertising posters in the run-up to the election.

A senior source at Millbank, Labour's campaign headquarters, said that during the year leading to the launch of the election campaign, every Tory poster had been sent to the party a few days in advance.

He said: "This has been really helpful. It has enabled us to prepare for all their attacks."

Unfortunately for Labour, the source of information from Central Office appears to have dried up just before the start of the campaign. Labour knew of the "New Labour, New Danger", the crying lion and the "Britain is Booming" campaigns, but were not alerted to the infamous little-Blair-sitting-on-daddy-Kohl's-knee advertisement.

Millbank sources say the posters turned up in brown paper envelopes. Suspensions on the

source of the leak will centre on the advertising agency used by the Conservatives, MC Saatchi, and will do nothing to improve relations between the party and its agency which have become strained because of the failure of its lion campaign and the Tories' continued failure to break through in the polls.

Claims and counter-claims about spies in each camp are now being levelled almost daily and it is clear that both parties know quite a lot about

each other's plans. The revelation about the advertising campaign follows the publication by the Tories earlier this week of Labour's "war book", a detailed outline of the party's campaign.

The Tories have also claimed that they have a mole inside Millbank who has provided Central Office with a copy of Tony Blair's election itinerary.

The Tories have claimed that they have known every day where Tony Blair has been going, but the failure of the Tory chicken to turn up to many of Mr Blair's visits suggests this may be a bit of bravado.

Despite the leaks and counter-leaks, the very tight security has managed to ensure that the real hot secrets of the campaign have remained hidden.

■ Voters in Blackpool are being offered free fish and chips at Harry Ramsden's in a campaign newspaper sent out by their Conservative candidate.

The paper, sent out by Richard Booth, the would-be MP for the highly-marginal Blackpool South, bears the words: "Vote Booth. Vote for Blackpool. Vote Conservative." next to a coupon for the famous chippy.

The ad, placed and paid for by the restaurant, says: "Bring three hungry people to Harry Ramsden's Blackpool."

"This voucher entitles you to a free haddock fillet meal when accompanied by three paying

customers." The offer says it is worth £5.35.

Last night the Liberal Democrats sent an angry solicitors' letter to Mr Booth's agent, Chris Hall, claiming that the ad constitutes "treating" and is illegal under the Representation of the People Act.

However, the Liberal Democrat peer, Lord McNally of Blackpool, did not appear to be taking the matter quite so seriously.

In a statement too full of ex-cruciating fish puns to be quoted at length, he said the Conservative Party chairman

should "reel back" his candidate.

"... but he won't. So Blackpool's battered Tories have had their chips. Next Thursday they'll be knocked off their perch and find there is no place in Government for them," he said.

Mr Hall said the attack was "absolute nonsense."

"Harry Ramsden's always does a coupon for anybody to bring friends and have a free meal. It is a standard practice in this sort of environment. You can pick them up in any free newspaper," he said.

PENSIONS ROW

Parties fail the funding test

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

Both main parties are misleading voters about their plans for pensions, according to independent analysis of one of the key proposals in the Conservative manifesto.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies, a respected think-tank, says in an analysis for the Independent that Conservative proposals for a "basic pension plus" does as Tony Blair claims, amount to replacement of the guaranteed basic state pension by a private pension. "It is effectively a privatisation of the state pension," said Paul Johnson, deputy director of the IFS.

This would apply only to people retiring after 2040, however, and not to people who are pensioners now or retire before then. The IFS argues that this privatisation would be a radical change to basic pension provision, and

one that is not demanded by funding problems. There would be no difficulty in continuing to pay for state pensions through the tax system. But its analysis does not allow Labour to claim that pensions are safe in its hands. For it now proposes, like the Conservatives, gradually to reduce basic state provision by linking the value of the pension to prices rather than earnings. "We are effectively seeking general agreement that the basic pension will be gradually phased out," Mr Johnson says.

In yesterday's dispute both parties played down the fact that anybody who is under 20 now cannot count on receiving a state pension that provides enough to live on, no matter who wins the election. The pattern of pension provision is almost certain to involve two tiers, a basic state sum and a top-up private pension. The amount provided by the state, whether under Labour or the Conservatives, will be minimal.

Why lies have been stuff of all elections

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

Banded allegations that Tony Blair and John Major are peddling bare-faced and despicable lies should come as no surprise to anyone; the history of the election hustings is littered with lies.

The first Labour government was defeated in the 1924 general election because of a forgery, the Zinoviev Letter, bought and disseminated by Conservative Central Office, which raised the spectre of British Communists being in- cted to bloody revolution.

In the 1945 election campaign, Winston Churchill said: "No Socialist system can be established without a political police... They would have to fall back on some form of Gestapo, no doubt very humanely directed, in the first instance."

Some first-time voters might not have been born in April 1979, when the Daily Mail published a front-page report headlined: "Labour's Dirty Dozen: 12 big lies they hope will save them."

One election statement that hangs round Mr Major's neck like a political albatross is his statement during the last election that, "We have no plans and no need to extend the scope of VAT."

Yesterday, at Labour's election press

Lies? The Daily Mail's front-page report in April 1979.

conference, Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, said of Mr Major: "He lies when he says that the tax burden has not increased since the last election. "Everybody who pays tax, who pays VAT, who pays National Insurance, who gets mortgage tax relief, and married couple's allowance, everybody who pays taxes knows that the tax burden has increased."

The Conservatives reply that in the financial year before the last election, 1991-92, the Treasury Red Book shows a tax burden of 36.5 per cent of national income, compared with 36 per cent in the year before this election, 1996-97. But if you take the year of the last election, 1992-93, the tax burden was 34.5 per cent, compared with 36.25 per cent this year.

In one passage of a reply to his press conference yesterday, Mr Major also suggested there should be no bust attached to the current boom - a statement that clearly defies the cyclical forces of economic gravity.



Warm welcome: A supporter braves the bad weather to cheer John Major during his walkabout in Ilford, east London, yesterday

Photograph: Tom Plinston

Chanting East-Enders make Major's day

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

John Major was mobbed by Asian supporters yesterday when his campaign went to the East End of London.

The crush was so great that security officers protecting the Prime Minister had to take Norma Major out of the crowd for her personal safety. In a later walkabout at Ilford in east London, Mrs Major, still apparently shaken by her experience in the crowd, remained in the background while the Prime Minister did a walkabout for the first time in the campaign.

In some of the most extraordinary scenes of the five-week campaign, Mr Major surrounded by police, security men, and camera crews in Whitechapel and was nearly

crushed by the weight of chanting Asian Eastenders.

Mr Major had intended to spend some time inside the forecourt of the mosque in Whitechapel, but he found a chanting mob there shouting "long live John Major - East-End welcome."

There was a smattering of heckling, but buoyed by the reception which prevented the Prime Minister completing his programme at the mosque, Mr Major said: "This is the bit I enjoy most."

He clearly felt that if the reception at the mosque could be repeated across Britain, he would be home and dry. There was booing when he went on a walkabout later in Ilford High Street, where the Tories are fighting one of the key marginals.

There are eight Conservative seats in Lon-

don with majorities of less than 10 per cent which Labour is hoping to take with a swing of less than 2.5 per cent, including Hayes and Harlington, Croydon North, Edmonton, Brentworth, Mitcham and Morden and Ilford South, won by Labour in 1992 under the old boundaries.

The Tories have been boosted in Tower Hamlets where Labour have installed Oona King against the wishes of some local supporters. Sher Ullah, 28, a student, said as the Prime Minister did his walkabout: "There are a lot of floating voters who are planning to vote Conservative next week, because they do not like the way the candidates have been selected by their party." The Tories are fielding Kabir Choudhury, who was born in Bangladesh.

But Mr Major, after 18 years of the Tories

in power, is finding it impossible to shake off the past.

He went by boat to London Docklands yesterday to highlight the regeneration of the city accompanied by Steven Norris, the former transport minister for London, whose other claim to fame was his widely publicised string of lovers. Also on the Thames ferry the *Beta*, was Sheila Gunn, the Prime Minister's press secretary, who was one of Mr Norris's mistresses. Mr Norris once explained the reason why people prefer to use their cars was that "you don't have to put up with dreadful human beings sitting alongside you."

They remain on friendly terms, but did not exchange so much as a glance as the campaign sailed down the Thames to Docklands.

THE HURRIED VOTER'S GUIDE

THE CAMPAIGN

Pensions took over as the issue of the day, but all the parties had their own themes. Labour used its morning press conference to give more details of a Crime and Disorder Bill which it intends to introduce in its first session if it wins the election. The Bill would deal with drugs, alcohol, juvenile offenders, anti-social behaviour and a curfew for children under 10.

The Liberal Democrats dropped their theme of the day - pensioners - to release a statement from a nurse who had seen a 22-year-old man die from cancer after having an exploratory operation cancelled three times. The nurse, who had contacted the *Mirror* newspaper last week, said she would vote Liberal Democrat because the party had the best policies on health.

The Conservatives were also forced off their theme of the day, "Britain's economic miracle", to defend their plans on pensions. Labour had claimed that the Tories' "basic pension plus" scheme which would gradually replace the state pension with private provision would mean its abolition. John Major hit back, saying that he would resign if his Cabinet ever abandoned its commitment to pensions for all.

The Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, defended the party against claims that it would put VAT on food if it won the election. Such measures "would be lunacy", he said.

KEY ARGUMENTS

John Major said he had never seen campaign tactics like the ones used by Labour over pensions before.

"This is just the politics of crude fantasy, scurrilous, unscrupulous campaigning in order to win votes from people who they wish to frighten."

"This sort of scare is a wholly different dimension. It really brings politics down into the gutter," the Prime Minister said.

Tony Blair warned of rises in crime under a fifth-term Conservative government. "The fear of crime hangs like a dark cloud in the air," the Labour leader said. "Two-thirds of women pensioners scared to leave their house at night. Our pensioners prisoners in their own homes who only want to live in peace. Surely the prisoners should be those who commit the crimes, not those who are the victims of crime. It cannot go on."

The Liberal Democrat leader, Paddy Ashdown, said the Conservatives' internal wars were tearing them apart. "The Conservative Party are now at war with themselves. Whether or not in government or opposition, I think the Conservatives as a political force may well be disabled for a number of years," he said.

GOOD DAY

Steven Norris was in his element yesterday as he accompanied John and Norma Major on a riverboat tour along the Thames in London. The former transport minister gave a running commentary to journalists as the catamaran cruiser - nicknamed Major's battle boat - went from Charing Cross Pier to the Docklands complex, to see the sight of last year's IRA bomb at South Quay, highlighting examples of inner-city regeneration.

ONE TO REMEMBER

John Major said he would walk out of politics and trigger an immediate general election should a Cabinet ever attempt to push him into scrapping the state pension. His declaration came after another round of insults when Labour refused to drop its claim that the pension would be abolished by the Tories. It raises the question as to whether an isolated Prime Minister would have the power to force a general election in defiance of his Cabinet.

BAD DAY

Tory Chicken has been strangely absent from the campaign trail recently. He reappeared yesterday as Tony and Cherie toured the Port of Dover. But it seems the poor bird has become a focus for anti-Tory feeling, and he felt the brunt of some discontent from the crowd. Worse was to come, as T.C. was detained by Port of Dover police and questioned about his accreditation. He was released, but inquiries were last night said to be ongoing.

HOGWASH

Labour responded to a request from *Your Garden* magazine to choose a flower that best reflected the party. It chose its own red rose, because, according to a Millbank minion, "red roses symbolise love, respect and dignity. The red rose of Labour reflects the strength of our commitment to Britain's future." Thanks are due to *Your Garden* magazine for unearthing such prize specimens.

THE OTHER PARTIES

The Scottish Nationalist Party said that an independent Scotland would give £288 million a year in overseas aid, equivalent to 0.7 per cent of GDP. Dr Alan Macartney, the party's external affairs spokesman, said the main thrust of a Scottish aid programme would be to assist long-term development.

Sir James Goldsmith addressed Asian voters at a visit to the London mosque with his daughter Jemima. He said a federal Europe would leave the Asian community "small" in a "vast, amorphous, soulless state." "Children will have to find an alternative to their families," he added. "They will go into gangs."

MEDIA STAR



Norma Major had to be rescued by security guards from a crowd of chanting John Major fans at the Whitechapel mosque in London's East End. The Prime Minister and his wife had intended to spend some time at the mosque, but were confronted with a large crowd shouting "Long live John Major - East-End welcome". Mrs Major later appeared in the centre of Ilford in east London, but seemed somewhat shaken by her ordeal. From that point onwards she remained in the background, as Mr Major went on his first walkabout in the campaign.

election '97



by Aanonymous

The Candidate stood on the observation platform at the top of the Customs tower overlooking Dover harbour, and waved at the cameramen. Next to him Mrs Candidate leaned against the railing and waved as well. Below him, on one side he looked down upon a long pier, where 60 snappers and piranhas gazed up at him and his wife. On the other side was the English Channel. Nowhere within five miles was there a voter. After three minutes he would gently usher Mrs Candidate back into the building and return to ground level.

You had to do it. If you wanted to lead a nation, do your bit, exercise power over real and tangible things – then you had to accept the absurdities. The Iron Lady herself had once been photographed in her best suit holding a baby

He had once – long before becoming leader himself – complained about it to the Welshman: the ridiculous “photo-opportunities”, involving posing with innocent members of the public, the ghoulish appearances at the bedside of cancer victims and the visits to manure-littered country cattle markets.

The Welshman had sucked at his pipe and quoted an anecdote from the early, precarious days of Bolshevik rule in Russia. A horny-handed veteran of the struggle had been called to see Comrade Lenin in his Kremlin office. “Comrade,” said Lenin, “I want you to be our ambassador to France.” “But Vladimir Ilich,” replied the squeamish veteran, who believed that ambassadors were a bourgeois concept in an era of proletarian internationalism, “surely I will not have to wear a top hat?” “If necessary, should the revolution require it,” said his implacable leader, “you will wear two top hats.”

“Lenin was serious about power,” concluded the Welshman. “Are you?”

So he’d steeled himself. The worst bit was all the stuff about body-language. When he should

have been thinking about his post-election cabinet, he was forced to worry about hand-shaking techniques. The problem here was twofold. What did you say? And what did you actually do with your hands? He had ended up with “good to see you” as his standby phrase, but found it hard to get any real enthusiasm into his voice. The right arm would be extended, suggesting confidence, and the shake itself would always be firm. The left arm was, he knew, a problem. It would be un-English to deploy it – like Bill Clinton did – to grab the elbow or drape round the shoulder of unknown punters. So it ended up bent and tentative by his jacket pocket, looking as useless as Bob Dole’s shattered limb.

But sorry as he felt for his left arm, he felt much sorer for Mrs Candidate. Increasingly her prominent cheekbones looked like two bruises on her delicate face, and her deep brown eyes seemed alive to the potential for humiliation that existed in so much of what she was forced to do. Yet she had not complained once.

And (when he thought about it) he felt sorer still for the pensioner whose home would be invaded by piranhas

and whose life story would make gossip on the battlebus, simply because she had featured in a five-minute election stop.

It was the way things were. In ‘92 the Grey Man had raised a scare by making absurd claims about the Welshman’s tax plans. How unfair! How untrue! And yet how well it had worked. So this election the complaint had been returned; the Grey Man’s “pension plans” were now scaring the daylight out of the electorate.

In another universe, perhaps, there was a planet on which adult discussion was possible. On that Utopia he would have quarrelled with the Grey Man’s timing, but agreed with the general thrust of his policy for reforming pensions. And the Grey Man in return would have admitted that the Candidate had transformed his party, but that there were still concerns about devolution.

No, this was no Utopia. So he turned slightly and looked back over Dover beach, where the poet Matthew Arnold had once felt the tide of faith recede.

Mrs Candidate seemed alive to the potential for humiliation

Talking tough: Parties compete to play the law and order card

Blair promises Bill to tackle youth crime

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

A crime and disorder Bill to tackle anti-social behaviour, youth crime and drugs would be among the first measures brought in by a new Labour government, Tony Blair said yesterday.

Mr Blair used his party’s morning press conference to attack Tory policies on law and order as strong on rhetoric but weak on results.

“The Conservatives were elected on a law and order platform but their record has borne no relation to their rhetoric,”

he said. “Only one crime in 50 ends in a conviction. Petty crime is tolerated, the unacceptable accepted.”

Mr Blair warned that a Conservative fifth term would mean a further rise in violent crime, fewer convictions and more people living in fear.

Labour’s Bill would herald the appointment of a “drug czar” to co-ordinate the fight against illegal drugs, the reform of the youth justice system to bring in fast-track punishment and a new crime of racial harassment.

It would also include new rules to prevent the intimidat-

ion of witnesses, new duties for local authorities to prevent alcohol abuse and a night-time curfew on children under 10. The Bill would also include measures to deal with anti-social behaviour and “nuisance neighbours”.

Labour said violent crime had risen by 11 per cent since 1980. Then, there were two and a half million crimes and 450,000 convictions for criminal offences, but by 1995 there were five million crimes but just 300,000 convictions.

Labour’s home affairs spokesman, Jack Straw, challenged Michael Howard, the

Home Secretary, to say which of Labour’s anti-crime measures he would oppose if the party won the election.

Mr Howard did not answer the challenge directly, but he claimed Labour had admitted it would not be as tough on crime as the Conservatives.

Labour would not implement the Conservatives’ plans for automatic life sentences for repeat rapists and armed robbers or amend the Crime (Sentences) Act to reinstate tough minimum sentences for career burglars and drug dealers.

Their proposals to tackle nuisance neighbours would

give victims less protection than provisions in the Tories’ Protection from Harassment Act, he said. Under that act, he said, anyone who behaved on more than one occasion in a way which caused someone to feel harassed would be liable to up to six months in prison.

The Conservatives would provide £75m to pay for CCTV cameras and money for 5,500 extra police.

“The truth is that Labour talk tough but act soft,” he said. “If you want a party which is prepared to be tough on criminals, vote Conservative on 1 May.”



Real lives: Tony Blair taking tea and hearing Folkestone residents' stories in the Eastcliffe Pavilion Cafe yesterday

Photograph: David Rose

Tea and sympathy for victims who live in Howard's backyard

Steve Boggan

Tony Blair took the fight over crime into Michael Howard's back yard yesterday as part of Labour's attempt to highlight fears over law and order.

The Labour leader met victims of crime in the Home Secretary's Kent constituency, Folkestone and Hythe, where recorded offences have increased by 167 per cent since the Tories came to power.

During a heavily stage-managed event, Mr Blair and his wife, Cherie, took tea with eight people whose lives had been touched by threats, violence, robbery or burglary. The victims, all Labour supporters, had been lined up in advance, but no one among the party's spin doctors took pleasure in learning that one of them, who had witnessed a robbery, was on the frightening end of a second violent crime just hours before meeting Mr Blair.

Michelle Milton, 25, had been invited to tell the Labour leader about a robbery last year at the Co-op shop in Cheriton where

she works as assistant manager. However, on Thursday night, the shop's cashier was held up at knife point for a second time.

“I still feel a bit shaken,” she said yesterday. “I’ve been working there since I was 16 and there never used to be any trouble. But now, there are kids stealing all the time.”

Kids are stealing all the time, things are getting worse

there are threats of violence and there have been these two robberies.

“Michael Howard talks tough, but things are getting worse. He promises to put more police on the beat and then closes down our local police station after 6pm every night. What kind of policing is that?”

They were sentiments repeated over and over again. Frank Williams, 81, and his wife, Maisie, 73, told how they were afraid to go out at night. Catherine Goodall, 82, described her two burglaries; butcher David Anderson told how youths had twice smashed his shop front; and store owner, Ejaz Mohammed, 63, described the two times he had fought off would-be robbers – one of whom was armed with a knife and a baseball bat and one who carried a gun.

It was an exercise that could have been played out in any constituency in the country and it is by no means certain that Labour's plans to have the time taken to get young offenders to court would have prevented any of the crimes.

But one thing was undeniable: the fear of crime is high on the list of voters' concerns, particularly among the elderly. And in Mr Howard's constituency – where he sits with an unassailable majority of 8,910 over the Liberal Democrats and 21,000 over Labour – that fear is as real as anywhere else in the country.

The clue is in the red boxes

Kim Sengupta

It is the red box surrender. The Independent can reveal that in an astonishing outbreak of defeatism no less than six Conservative Cabinet ministers have asked for their ministerial boxes to be packed up as souvenirs – something only done when ministers leave office.

By tradition, departing ministers are allowed to take away one of these potent symbols of power to remind them of them when they were lions of the front benches. Calling them in indicates a certain lack of confidence that John Major would form the next government.

Two of the six can pay the £50 fee and take away their boxes with their heads held high. They had both indicated they do not seek to serve in government again. One of them is Sir Patrick Mayhew.

But the other four have given no indication that they want to go. Informal sources say that all four would have had high hopes of continuing as ministers if the Tories got back in. The boxes, which cost £795 each, now have to have their locks modified before the departing minister can take them.

The various government departments pass on the names to the manufacturers, Barrow and

Hepburn, in preparation for the changeover.

A Whitehall source said: “The list which has arrived at the makers makes very interesting reading. Two of them make sense, because both the men said they were going.”

“But others have obviously given up all hopes of office in the near future – the Tories would not win, or they would lose their seats.”

Barrow and Hepburn have been making the red boxes for Whitehall since the 1920s and are known for their discretion. However, the list passes through several hands before getting to them.



Wavering voters deserting Tories, poll says

Barrie Clement

Within the last 24 hours, reluctant Conservative voters have started to drift away from the party, according to private Liberal Democrat polls and canvassing returns.

Senior Liberal Democrats said last night that they were the beneficiaries in their key marginals, while it was understood that Labour was attracting the “switchers” in their target seats. One source said the campaign seems to have gone through three

phases. While Labour was in a commanding position four weeks before the election, later the Conservatives started to pick up votes as the European issue came to the fore.

Over the last day or so, however, concerns over Europe had abated and those who had returned to the Conservatives, are now going back once more to the opposition parties. Elsewhere sources confirmed the Liberal Democrats' impression.

An official said: “Further and deeper reflection is persuading people to return to

their original choice. Although we can't claim any scientific basis for the assertion, we believe that voters now have a settled idea that the rasnals must go. This is mixed with anger over what has been going on in the Conservative party.”

The sources pointed out that national polls are invariably two or three days behind what is happening on the ground. The contentions of the senior sources will be tested when surveys are published at the beginning of next week.

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SATURDAY 26 APRIL 1997

election '97

Northern Ireland's Estonian a favourite in Wales

Tony Heath

Lembit Opik, Montgomeryshire's Liberal Democrat candidate, has one of the most intriguing CVs of any election hopeful. He was born in Bangor, Northern Ireland, to Estonian parents who fled from the Communists who took over their country in 1945.

A philosophy degree at Bristol University followed. Then Mr

Opik announced he would stand down after 14 years at Westminster. Except for a blip in 1979, when the Tories unexpectedly captured the seat, Montgomeryshire has been Liberal territory for more than a century.

Mr Carille leaves behind a majority of more than 5,000 over the Tories, sufficient, it seems, to see Mr Opik home. But no chances are being taken. "Paddy's been here twice and David [Sir David Steel] once," the energetic Mr Opik said as he strode round Tan Yr Allt, a 1960s estate contrasting sharply with the timber-framed black-and-white houses that dot Llandilo.

The Rev Penny Burkill, who looks after half a dozen Methodist congregations, was impressed: "He's the sort of person who will represent us well - he's very sincere," she said.

Back in town, Mr Opik expanded on one of his favourite pastimes - motorcycling. He bumped into Simon Evans, about to ride off on a gleaming 750cc machine to his job as a computer operator in Newtown, 10 miles away. "I own two," Mr Opik remarked modestly, as a discussion on stopping distances and fuel consumption got under way. Transport is a problem for Owen Jarman, a

72-year-old retired farmer visiting Llandilo from his remote mountain home. "We have a post bus and let's hope the Post Office isn't privatised," he said. Mr Opik nodded vigorously.

Trays of meats ranging from prime steak to pig's liver are displayed at Edward Hamer's shop, underlining Mid-Wales's dependence on pastoral farming.

BSE is much talked about. The Tory candidate, a farmer, Glyn Davies, has had six cases in his herd. "I well understand how much of a shock BSE has

been," he says. The latest European Union rebuff to Britain is not exactly helpful to the Tory cause. Labour, third in 1992, is fielding Angharad Davies, a 25-year-old political researcher regarded as a rising star.

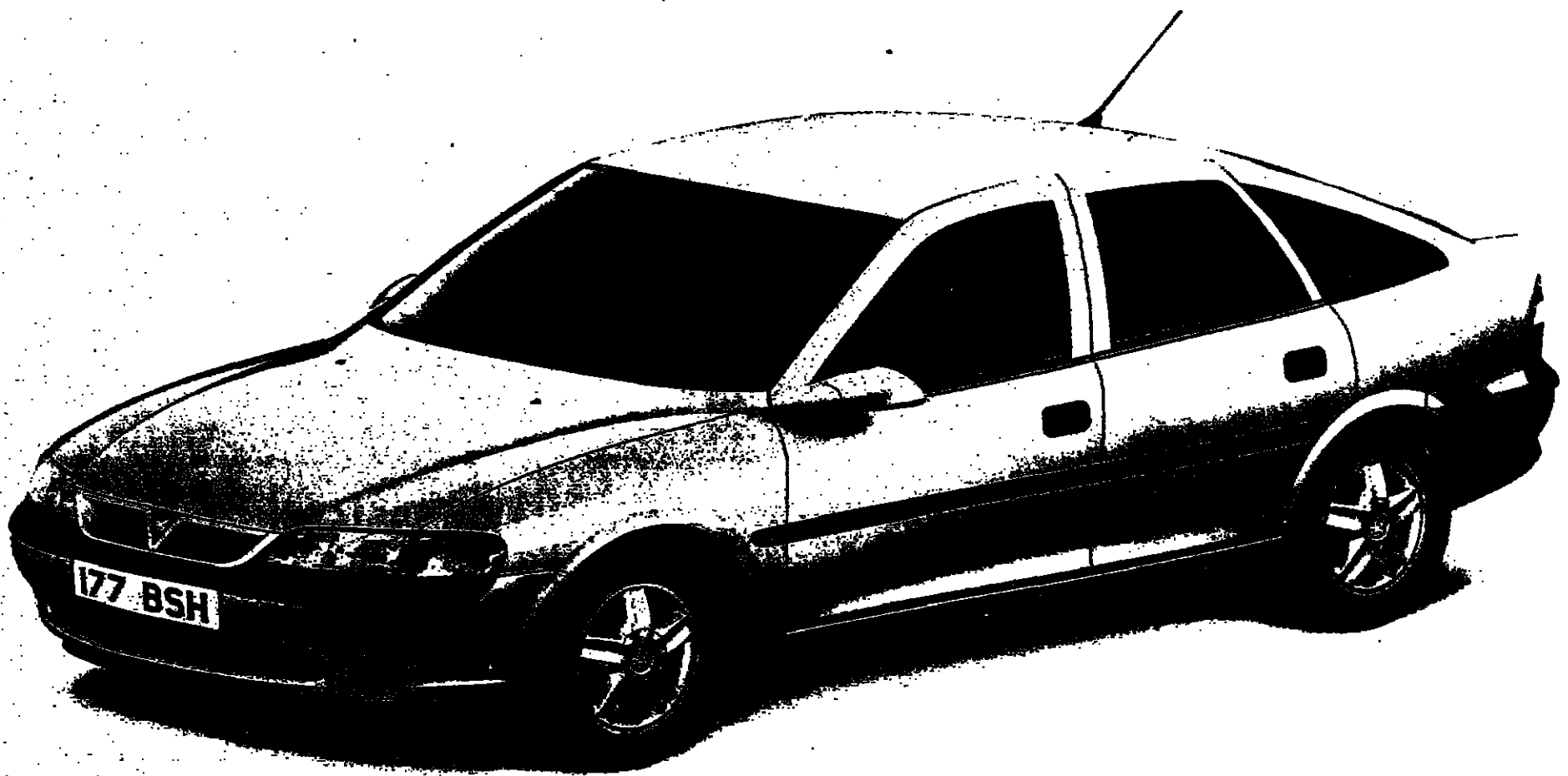
Helen Jones, of Plaid Cymru, the Green Party's Sue Walker, and John Bufton, of the Referendum Party are striving to make an impact but without much success.

Mr Opik is refreshingly open. "I have a 70 per cent chance of winning the Tories a 30 per cent chance," he says. A man of many parts, he claims to have loved flying ever since falling out of a tree when he was seven. He holds a pilot's licence, paraglides and is an amateur astronomer.

Vote of confidence: Lembit Opik, campaigning in Montgomeryshire, hopes for an easy win in this traditionally Liberal seat, but is taking nothing for granted

Photograph: John Voos

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QUOTES OF THE DAY

"I don't think they're xenophobic. I don't think they all hate foreigners. Hope none of them hate foreigners."

- Kenneth Clarke on the Conservative Party

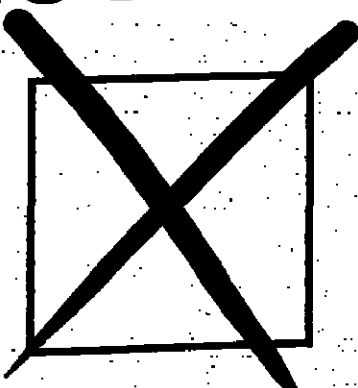
We would send both Labour and the Conservatives a bunch of dried flowers - whilst decorative, they have no substance or life to them - 'Your Garden' magazine, asking the Liberal Democrats what flowers they would send the other parties

The Conservatives are in near panic this morning because we are telling the truth about this - shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown on pensions

The public has been fed a diet of Euro-myth and Euro-fear, so when the time comes to decide, who will blame them for voting against closer relations with our neighbours? - Church of England newspaper

Compiled by Sam Coates

TOP WRITERS PUT PEN TO PAPER



WHICH WAY 139 TOP WRITERS WILL VOTE AND WHY

New Statesman

WHAT'S GOING ON

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election '97

Television's Boulton wanderer



Photographs: Kalpesh Lathigra

7:00am Boulton wakes at the Royal Horseguards Hotel in Whitehall, his home for the duration of the campaign. At 8am, after stopping in at Sky's Millbank offices, he arrives at the Liberal Democrats' "Take your daughters to work" press conference. Meets one four-year-old afterwards. "Have your picture taken with Adam," urges mummy. "Wise choice," says Boulton, as the child flees.

8:15am Boulton's first television appearance of the day. Returns to Sky studios. Then on to Conservative press conference at 9.30am on "Labour's Emergency Budget", where John Major, Kenneth Clarke and a grinning Brian Mawhinney issue dire warnings on Labour's planned July Budget. Unhappy with their answers to his questions, Boulton spends 10 minutes haranguing Tory strategist Danny Finkelstein before filing another live piece to camera. "Not a bad morning," he concedes, mulling over a rare (if true) election appearance by Virginia Bottomley. "Sometimes I get woken up early to do something at 7am."

10:00am Boulton sets off for Labour's press conference, accompanied by Sky's election psephologist, Professor Michael Thrasher. "The last general election, we finished at about 5.30am. I went straight to bed; he went on to do interviews at Downing Street. I thought he was mad," Professor

Thrasher says. Boulton's schedule, he observes, is exhausting. "But you get pulled along. You think, 'If he can do it, then I should be able to'."

After the press conference, Boulton files an update and then finds time for a quick election analysis for a Middle Eastern television crew in a nearby park. "You have to assume you could be on camera at any moment," he says.

Returns to office for forward-planning meeting. "Everyone else does split shifts. He's the only one that goes straight through," says a producer admiringly. Meanwhile, the *Daily Telegraph's* Petronella Wyatt phones to cancel an appearance on the evening show. "Aha! Petronella's got a crush on Adam!" exclaims a colleague. For the first time that morning, Boulton is momentarily flustered.

12:30pm Another live link from outside the Commons, about the parties' tax "black holes", followed by a further three promotional slots for his Sunday show - all different, to account for an unfinalised guest list. Boulton, apparently famous for his dishevelled appearance, is bullied into combing his hair. ("There's a joke in the office that Adam's the man Armani would pay not to wear his suits," says a colleague.)

A colleague says it is not unusual for Boulton to do a live interview every hour. Stops to talk to elderly couple who, despite hearing he is not from the Referendum Party, reveal their fears for post-EMU pen-

Early rise, on to press conference, promo, back to studios, host poll special, midnight close - a day in the life of TV's busiest newsman

If you thought politicians worked long hours during this election, spare a thought for the people covering it. Adam Boulton, political editor of Sky News, is on screen more than any other television journalist during the campaign.

As well as hosting two hour-long flagship political shows daily, Boulton, 38, provides updates and analyses as often as 10 times a day, and for his trouble earns more than £150,000 a year.

On Thursday, *The Independent* spent a day - all 18 hours of it - with the man who has been tipped for the top political job in broadcasting, political editor of the BBC.

Report by Jojo Moyes

sions. He will later use these as the basis of his interview with Malcolm Bruce, the Liberal Democrat's economic spokesman.

1:15pm To the Ivy for lunch with Jonathan Haslam, to meet on planned documentary series, *Major in Power*. ("It will work whatever the outcome"), Boulton has been sent a free packet of Clorox mints. "Not a bad idea," he concludes. "Some politicians have breath so bad it could slay

you." *The Independent* notes these names for future reference.

3:30pm Into make-up in preparation for 10-minute interview with Malcolm Bruce. Large amount of concealer applied under the eyes. Emergency sponge applied to the remains of lunch on shirt. Boulton apparently does not mind if people think him slovenly. "Apparently, it makes for high viewer recognition."

3:50pm Interview with Malcolm Bruce, followed by stint on telephone. Then lengthy discussion with Sky colleagues on how President Clinton's style compares with British political leaders, in preparation for appearance on the 6pm show of Joe Klein, author of *Primary Colors*, the semi-fictionalised story of the Clinton campaign.

An internal memorandum reveals that Boulton is on call for 20 hours a day during the election. "I do get ribbed about the amount of time I spend on screen," he admits. "Some people are surprised to see me off it." Does he ever fluff his interviews when he gets tired? "No, but the - er, er," Boulton pauses. "The ... verbal dexterity goes a bit."

4:30pm Labour's heritage spokesman, Jack Cunningham, arrives for interview. He stands in the office for some minutes before anyone notices. "That's alright," he says. "I've done so many interviews today it's quite nice to be left in peace."

Boulton works on rewriting scripts for his 6pm programme. *The Independent* rejoices at his first yawn of the day.

6:00pm Boulton hosts his live one-hour show, including a debate with Suzanne Moore about the female vote. Afterwards, he changes into two different suits to do further promos until 7.35pm.

At this point, he says, he usually has some

"quiet time" where he telephones his family. ("I think he sends them photos too," jokes one colleague.) But does he have any interests outside politics? "My family. Plants. These are all mine," he says, gesturing towards the office foliage. But earlier in the day, a political writer revealed something of a scoop. "I saw him at the pictures on Saturday. The Screen on the Hill, in Belsize Park. He does have a social life."

At 9pm Boulton breaks off from his supper to do another live link, his fifth of the day. At 11pm, he hosts his second hour-long live show, including a satellite interview with Joe Klein, and debates the day's issues with Bea Campbell and Gus Wilson. Grins all round when Klein compares Blair to Clinton thus: "We've seen these lines rehearsed by the political equivalent of Olivier. A great politician, Blair is. Olivier, he's not."

12:10am Boulton, removing make-up, has brief logistical discussion with remaining staff about following day's trip to Birmingham.

Returns to the hotel. He will go to sleep at about 1am, and be ready to leave for Birmingham at 7am.

How does Boulton wind down? He is teetotal for the duration. "I read tomorrow's newspapers," he says. "Oh, and I might watch Vincent Hannah's (political) programme." Your reporter, shaking her head, makes her excuses and leaves.

Spoof paper claims election cancelled

Sam Coates and Ben Summers

Thousands of bewildered commuters were handed copies of a spoof newspaper, *Evading Standards*, a parody of the London *Evening Standard*, last night.

The paper, produced by a

Evading Standards
Never Mind the Ballots

group calling itself the propaganda wing of Reclaim the Streets, announced "General Election cancelled - Election

collapses as new polls reveal massive public cynicism". However, the first issue of *Evading Standards* never made

it to the streets after all 20,000 copies were impounded by police and three distributors arrested. They were charged with incitement to cause affray and obstruction.

Yesterday, more than 20 volunteers handed out 20,000 copies of the second issue at Underground and mainline stations

throughout the capital. The eight-page special included articles purporting to expose the fallacy of the free market and the death of democracy. The detailed parody also mimicked many of the advertisements running in the original - including a twist on a Labour slogan: "Britain deserves better - than politicians."

The group producing it claims to be the propaganda wing of Reclaim the Streets, which itself claims to be more left-wing than communists. Supporters of the radical organisation were heavily involved in protests against the Newbury bypass in Berkshire and the extension to the M11.

According to a spokesman for the paper, its aim was to send-up the banality of the election; and to emphasise that "the fallacy that passes for a democracy is not the only avenue for people who want to make a real difference to society". He said production of the paper had been shrouded in secrecy for fear of action, either by the police or the *Evening Standard*.

The *Evening Standard* refused to comment last night.

Cancer death revives Jennifer's ear furore

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

In a move which had echoes of the "Jennifer's ear" controversy of 1992, the Liberal Democrats yesterday claimed the vote of a nurse who said she had just seen a 22-year-old patient die needlessly from cancer.

The anonymous nurse, who told her story in a newspaper interview last week, had her words read out video by an actress at two Liberal Democrat press conferences yesterday.

The party said she had spoken at length to its leader, Paddy Ashdown, after seeing him throw away a prepared speech and read out an article based on her experiences to a gathering of health professionals.

A week ago, *The Mirror* filled its front page with her anguished description of how the young man had died in her arms after having an exploratory operation cancelled three times.

She said he had first complained of stomach pains two-and-a-half months ago and had been referred to a consultant three weeks later. There was no bed available and he was finally admitted to hospital a week last Tuesday. By then the cancer had spread too far and he died two days later in her arms.

There had been no doctor available to notify his relatives, and she had been forced to telephone his parents to tell them. She said she did not have the heart to tell his girlfriend.

"His death had upset everyone ... most of us think that if he had been admitted straight away he might have been able to have chemotherapy," she told the newspaper.

Yesterday the Liberal Democrats published a statement from the nurse saying she had "decided to do something positive about it", by switching to the party after being a long-term Labour voter.

"The sad story I told is not unique. There are similar stories to be told in hospitals all over Britain. That can't be right. I shall put my trust in Paddy Ashdown and his party to make the difference for the NHS," the statement said.

Mr Ashdown defended the move against charges of "shroud-waving" at a gathering in Scotland, although his campaign manager, Lord Holme, said the young man's family had not been contacted. "We are not talking about the personal details of a tragedy. This is not Jennifer's ear, this is about a single person's cry for help from inside the NHS," he said.

During the 1992 election, Labour published details of the problems suffered by a little girl called Jennifer while she was waiting for an ear operation.

The move backfired badly when family members criticised the party for using her case as an election issue.

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مكتبة من الأمل

First-time voters lean towards the devil they know

Michael Streeter finds favour for John Major among the Redditch young

Many first-time voters will support the Conservatives on 1 May because they feel Britain is "doing all right" under the current government, according to *The Independent's* young people's group in the marginal seat of Redditch.

The lack of raw ideological conflict in the election – as opposed to bitter rows over details – has left many in the group feeling there is no need for change for change's sake at a time of growing prosperity for many of their families.

None of the main political parties appears to have enthused the first-timers, though Tony Blair comes out as a better communicator with the young. As with older groups, there is concern over Europe and some support for the clear-cut policy of the Referendum Party compared with the wait-and-see approach

accepts that Tony Blair personally performs well but thinks there could be an old-new Labour split if the party were to gain power.

Michelle Oldfield, 18, a pupil of Arrow Vale High School in Redditch, which was visited by Tony Blair earlier in the campaign, said that after meeting the Labour leader she had considered voting for him, but now will vote Conservative on 1 May. "I think I will be voting in line with my family – we seem to be doing quite well as a family. The majority of my friends are voting Conservative."

The campaign has not impressed her. "It just seems as if everyone is putting everyone else's policies down."

Fellow pupil Sarah Cox, 18, finds much of the debate between the parties "silly". For her the main concern is Europe, and she will support the Referendum Party "so we can have a referendum now". "I like the pound coins, it's nice to be different."

Sales-office administrator Ian Wright, 19, may also vote for Sir James Goldsmith's party, believing the country should either be fully in or out of Europe. "I'm worried about us sitting on the edge. For me it's all or nothing." A Labour government would be a "leap in the dark" and, though attracted by the honesty of many Liberal Democrat policies, he did not believe they could win.

However, Labour has won a number of converts among young voters. Mark Coley, 18, a pupil at Arrow Vale, thinks the country needs change and that Tony Blair speaks to the whole country. "I think John Major is only speaking to half the nation," he said.

Richard Watson, 19, a university student, said the main parties were behaving like the cartoon characters Tom and Jerry. "One party says one thing, and then one party says another, and so it goes on." He probably won't vote, because he says nothing has "grabbed" him.

Sixth-former Andrew Davies, 19, will not vote either, but not because he doesn't care. "It's not apathy, I'm making a reasoned decision not to vote. All this bickering is just childish. They don't deserve my vote."

It's like Tom and Jerry; one party says one thing, one says another – and so it goes on

of the Conservatives and new Labour. There is also dismay in what they see as sterile and negative campaigning.

Alice Melvin, 21, who works for a bookmaker, believes the Conservatives have "put the country back on its feet" and thinks they should be allowed to continue. "The country is doing all right as it is and a change now might be quite bad." She is mostly concerned about the National Health Service and law and order – a common theme among the first-time voters – as well as the environment.

Luke Davis, 18, a student at the North East Worcester College, considered voting Labour but says both main parties have performed equally badly in the election and concludes it's "better the devil you know", the mantra of many Tory voters. He

Cosy couples who may hold sway

Kim Sengupta

They are the stuff that advertising and marketing men's dreams are made of. And now it seems they will be deciding who governs Britain for the next five years.

The most crucial marginal constituencies will be decided on Thursday by the nation's youngest voters, according to a new survey. The study, based on the 16 most marginal seats, claims to be the first into the make-up of the voters who would hold the balance of power.

And, warns the marketing firm Claritas, aspiring MPs in these constituencies would ignore six key groups at their peril: Terraced Start-ups, Soaps and Satellites, Backyard Gossips, Cosy Couples, New Beginnings, and Upward Bound.

The most prevalent are the Terraced Start-ups – white-collar workers living in their first homes as owner-occupiers, who spend their income on foreign

travel, pubs, car-maintenance, and exercise. The majority are impressed by Tony Blair and are likely to vote for Labour.

Tory hopes lie with the Soaps and Satellites. They tend to get what news and entertainment they want from television. They live in the suburbs, and cultural activities include computer games and watching videos.

The Upward Bound – wealthy young professionals – and the Backyard Gossips – families living in terraced homes – are almost equally split between Labour and the Conservatives.

The Cosy Couples – those in double-income households, and the New Beginnings – people on the first rung of the career ladder, who are renting while waiting to buy their first homes – are the least represented.

They may vote for the Liberal Democrats, or fringe parties, but the majority appear to be politically inactive, and thus an untapped pool of voters.

Young voters in the key marginals



Polls apart: Sue Meacham, one of the householders of the Cavendish Place, which the council forgot about

Photograph: Steve Hill

Council slip puts estate on lunatic fringe

Kim Sengupta

Residents of a housing estate have been disenfranchised from next Thursday's poll owing to a blunder by officials.

While the rest of the electorate exercises its right to decide who governs Britain, householders at Cavendish Place, in Evesham, Worcestershire, will have the same voting status as lunatics, the Royal Family, peers and criminals in prison.

The number of people who have lost their polling right is in dispute. According to residents, most of the 50 properties in the private development have been missed out. Wychavon District Council says some of the householders can vote elsewhere.

In a mis-quip, the council apparently decided Cavendish Place Estate did not exist, so neither did the people. This did not stop them from cashing cheques for council tax of up to £1,000 per property.

The estate, with houses costing around £150,000, had been in existence since spring last year and between last September and October residents should have received forms for electoral rolls.

None of this happened at Cavendish Place. When one concerned resident telephoned the council, he was sent a form, but this did not lead to officials remembering the other 49 homes.

Graham and Sue Meacham discovered neither of them had the vote last Tuesday, barring them from taking part in both the national and local elections on the same day. Mrs Meacham, 36, said: "I called the local council straight away, but they said it was too late to do anything."

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international

Warriors must fight the Taliban

James Fergusson tracks down one of Afghanistan's leading mujahedin

Bala Morghab, Afghanistan — At first sight the Morghab Valley in north-west Afghanistan seems a blessed place. The fields are carpeted in poppies; sheep and horses graze together in peace and men are out trapping quail with nets.

On closer inspection, however, the grazing horses turn out to be the mounts of an Uzbek cavalry unit; the quail netters are

all soldiers, seeking to supplement their meagre front-line rations; and the villages nestling idyllically on the valley floor are all empty, their Pashtun residents either having fled or been killed.

This is the western front in the fight between the Taliban, the Muslim fundamentalist militia who captured Kabul seven months ago, and a firm-



sy alliance of mujahedin commanders and communists.

There has been little fighting since the winter, when the Taliban's northward advance was blocked on three fronts. But

with the melting of the snows, the two sides have been dancing around each other, testing each other's defences in expectation of the battle to come. Nowhere is it more likely to

start than in the Morghab Valley, where Ismail Khan, a legend in the struggle against the Russian invaders in the 1980s, is busy preparing a counter-attack. Khan, 49, a

man with shrewd, twinkling eyes and a snowy white beard, was ousted from the governorship of Herat two years ago. This week, in his first inter-

view for six months, he vowed to take it back, with or without the support of General Abdul Rashid Dostam, the former deputy defence minister who has emerged as the main player in the northern alliance.

"Internal pressure is beginning to tell on the Taliban," he said at his headquarters, a ruined farmhouse near Bala Morghab. "Heratis are enlightened, good people, different from the rest of the country. They will rise and support us as we advance. Dostam's support is not essential."

There may be another reason for his confidence, in the shape of military support from Iran, sworn enemies of the Taliban. Khan denies this support exists, even though the helicopter that ferried me to the front-line meeting was loaded with Iranian-made anti-tank and anti-personnel landmines. He is also thought to have two bases in Iran, east of Meshed, raising the prospects of a two-pronged attack on Herat.

Much of his talk is bravado, but his soldiers are evidently intensely loyal, and driven by the pain of dispossession. "Three hundred of my boys have vowed to fight the Taliban with their last drop of blood," he says, before explaining the Koranic concept of *amanat*: "Those that die here will be buried where they fall, but later we will disinter them and take them to Herat."

Dostam's troops, by contrast,

Stopped in their tracks: Taliban soldiers riding a tank captured from their communist and mujahedin foes near Kabul. There has been a lull in the fighting during the winter, but the next arena of conflict is likely to be the Morghab Valley. Photograph: AP



are taken back to their home provinces to be buried. They are also noticeably less well-disciplined.

Like most Afghans, Ismail Khan blames his country's troubles on foreign intervention. The Taliban revolution, he believes, is less to do with religious fervour than with the profits to be made from the vast reserves of natural gas in Turkmenistan, a few miles to the north.

The pipeline that will take this gas to market in the industrial world has yet to be built, although one possible route is through Afghanistan: any such pipeline must necessarily pass through Herat province. He is convinced that Pakistan's support for the Taliban is based on the belief that only the Taliban can provide the security necessary for a pipeline.

"Three years ago I met with the Taliban and Benazir Bhutto in Turkmenistan and assured them that I could provide security. The Taliban agreed not to take Herat, but then the US ambassador in Islamabad paid them a visit and they changed their minds." The front runner for the pipeline contract is Unocal, a Texas-based company.

"The oil companies gambled badly when they backed the Taliban. If they send the pipeline through Herat they will have to build a checkpoint at every metre, otherwise we will blow it up."

significant shorts

21 killed as Algerian rebels blast train

Twenty-one people were killed and 20 wounded when a homemade bomb exploded by a train passing through a station near Algiers, security forces said. The official news agency, quoting a security-forces statement, said the explosion occurred when a passenger train was passing near Oued El Kerma railway at 8am yesterday. It described the blast as "a criminal act", which usually refers to attacks by Islamist rebels. Reuters - Paris

Vote test for Winnie Mandela

President Nelson Mandela's former wife, Winnie, faces a leadership challenge at the conference of the ANC Women's League. Known as Winnie Madikizela-Mandela since her divorce, the Women's League president was expected to seek re-election against the Health Minister, Nkosazana Zuma, and the league deputy president, Thandi Modise. AP - Rustenburg

Suu Kyi welcomes US embargo

The Burmese opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, praised the US for standing by its convictions and imposing sanctions on Burma because of Rangoon's rights record. The Nobel Peace laureate said President Bill Clinton and Congress should have a clear conscience that they made the right decision in banning new investment in the country. Reuters - Rangoon

Gorbachev mourns old friend

A weeping Mikhail Gorbachev paid homage to his old friend Zdenek Mlynar, a former Czechoslovak hardline Communist who became a dissident after the 1968 Prague Spring. Mlynar died on 15 April of lung cancer in a Vienna hospital, aged 66. Mr Gorbachev, last president of the Soviet Union, met Mlynar while studying law in Moscow between 1951 and 1954. Reuters - Prague

Rebels 'denied proper burial'

Relatives said the Peruvian authorities were not allowing a proper burial for the 14 hostage-takers killed in Tuesday's commando assault on the Japanese ambassador's residence and had not let kin see their dead. The claims came amid reports that some rebels were killed after surrendering. AP - Lima

Lining up with the terrorists

Angered by Israel and the US, the Arab world's most prominent poet announced: "We are... in favour of terrorism." In a poem by that title, published by the international newspaper *al-Hayat*, Nizar Qabbani, a Syrian, echoed increasing Arab frustration at the way Israeli and American politicians deny Palestinians the right to resist occupation. Reuters - Cairo

Grisly find at Dutch airport

Seven skulls and a baby's mummified corpse were found at Amsterdam's Schiphol airport. They were discovered during a routine drugs check. Reuters - Amsterdam

UN condemns Har Homa drive

A special UN General Assembly session demanded an immediate halt to construction by Israel of the Har Homa settlement in east Jerusalem. Reuters - New York

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Survivors tell of Oklahoma bomb horror

Tim Cornwell
Denver

From the moment Cynthia Kliver got up on 19 April 1995, it was "just a regular day", the Oklahoma lawyer said yesterday. At a water board hearing that opened at 9am where a farmer was seeking rights to sell bottled water from his land, her secretary had just turned on the tape, as usual. "In regard to these proceedings," Mr Kliver, presiding, was heard saying, "there are four elements for which I have to receive information..."

Then there is a boom of noise and static. In the third-floor office across the street from the Alfred Murrah building, shouts and screams and then distant sirens are heard.

"Everybody, let's get out of here," Ms Kliver calls out. "Watch the lights!"

The ceiling had fallen in, she told jurors yesterday. Cables and wires were everywhere and the electricity was still on.

The tape was played to jurors in the trial of Timothy McVeigh, accused of the Oklahoma bombing. "I thought the whole building was coming down on us," she said. "I didn't see there was any way we were going to get out."

Prosecutors used the tape to set the stage for their case, after the defence concluded its

"I thought the whole building was coming down on us. I didn't see any way we'd get out"

own opening statement on Thursday afternoon.

For months, Mr McVeigh's legal team has said suggestions that a wider conspiracy was involved in the bombing, from the American far-right fringe to a German neo-Nazi, with hints of bomb parts supplied by the IRA. But there was no mention of that when defence lawyer Stephen Jones stepped to the podium.

Instead, he spoke of mistaken identity and flimsy forensic evidence. He returned repeatedly to eye witnesses describing a second man, olive skinned and shorter than Mr McVeigh. It was the elusive "John Doe number two", declared non-existent by federal agents after one of the biggest manhunts in history. It was not Timothy McVeigh,

he insisted, who matched the figure who rented the Ryder truck. His fingerprints were not on the rental lease. Nor was it he who took a delivery of Chinese food at the local Dreamland motel.

The nitrates on him detected in forensic tests were found in guns and ammunition, Mr Jones said. "If Tim McVeigh built the bomb and put it in the truck, our proof would be that his fingerprints, his nostrils, his hair, his clothing, his car, his shoes, his socks would have it all over them. They don't."

After prosecutors cited letters to show Mr McVeigh believed blood should be spilt in the name of "liberty", Mr Jones described his client as a "political animal". "His politics were open and known to anyone that spent any time with him," he said. His case, he said, would establish "not a reasonable doubt, but that my client is innocent."



The higher plane: A giant cutout of the Communist figureheads Engels (left), Marx (centre) and Lenin hangs above members of Sri Lanka's leftist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna party at their third annual convention in the country's capital, Colombo. Photograph: Reuters

Chemical weapon vote aids Clinton

Mary Dejevsky
Washington

President Bill Clinton was savouring his victory yesterday after the Senate, which has a Republican majority, approved ratification of a global ban on chemical weapons by an unexpectedly comfortable margin, just five days before the treaty takes effect worldwide.

The vote, which was seen as a test of the President's authority, was hailed as opening the possibility of further bipartisan co-operation in Congress.

In the week between the announcement of the Senate debate on the chemical weapons convention and the actual debate, Mr Clinton made elaborate efforts to justify US accession to the treaty and meet some objections raised by its opponents. His final gambit was to write to the wavering Senate Republican leader, Trent Lott, promising that if the treaty turned out to be contrary to US security interests, or to foster rather than stem proliferation of chemical weapons, he would withdraw the United States from the treaty.

That promise convinced Mr Lott to drop most of his objections. The vote was 74 to 26, a majority of four more than the two-thirds that was required.

Earlier, Mr Clinton had assembled senior military and political figures to defend the treaty from the security and foreign policy perspectives. On Thursday morning, half way through the debate, the Senate went into a rare closed session to hear information about intelligence considerations.

The ground had additionally been prepared by the Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, who travelled the US, trying to win over sceptical senators and public opinion.

Republican opponents of the treaty, such as Mr Lott, praised Mr Clinton for agreeing to toughen the resolution that accompanied the text of the treaty. Afterwards, they were able to claim it was these assurances of safeguards for US security that had convinced them. Others, however, noted that the resolution was a secondary document and that if any conflict arose in future between the treaty text and the resolution, the treaty text would be the one considered legally binding.

For both Democrats and Republicans, the Senate vote held the hope that the budget, which is the subject of much behind-the-scenes bargaining, might be agreed without the acrimony and stalemate that have marked the process in the past.

Armageddon no pull for tourists

Patrick Cockburn
Megiddo

Armageddon was supposed to be the death of mankind. But politics looks like being the death of Armageddon. Cosmic loads used to flock to visit the Israeli site of Megiddo, attracted by the whiff of biblical apocalypse. Now the real threat of a more local apocalypse is keeping them away.

"Very few visitors are coming because of the political situation," says the ticket seller at the entrance to great mound at Megiddo, made up of the ruins of 20 ancient cities which once rose above the plain of Jezreel.

Here, according to the *Book of Revelations*, is to be the site of Armageddon, the last, all-consuming battle of mankind. "And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon," says St John the Divine.

Surely tourists intending to come to northern Israel to witness the apocalypse - with the predicted earthquakes, plagues, gigantic hailstones and the sea turning into blood - should

not be put off by television pictures of stone throwing and the occasional bomb.

Indeed, with the end of the second millennium imminent, Israeli tourist authorities were hoping for an influx of visitors wanting a ringside seat for the End of Days. The Israeli staff at Megiddo are happy to use the advertising potential of the belief in Armageddon.

If St John was right about Armageddon, Megiddo is the place from which to see it. Built 6,000 years ago, it stands at the entrance to a pass in the Carmel hills, through which once passed the ancient trade route between Egypt and Mesopotamia. In 1468BC, the Egyptian pharaoh, Tutmosis III, fought a chariot battle in the flatland around the fortress.

In fact, Megiddo may soon suffer a cruel, though less apocalyptic fate, than that mentioned in *Revelations*. Local authorities are contemplating building prayer grottoes on the mound, with visitors' stations and high-tech virtual reality facilities for those who have come to see the end of the world.

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international

SATURDAY 26 APRIL 1997 • THE INDEPENDENT

Spy chief falls foul of the West

Tony Barber
Europe Editor

Romania's intelligence agency yesterday blamed domestic and foreign pressure groups for the resignation of the man who had run the service since the anti-Communist revolution of 1989. A spokesman said that Virgil Magureanu, who took part in the overthrow of the Ceausescu dictatorship, had offered his resignation to President Emil Constantinescu last Thursday in the wake of "pressure from groups in Romania and abroad".

Bucharest newspapers said that Western countries might have signalled to the Romanian government that Mr Magureanu's departure would improve Romania's chances of joining Nato in the alliance's first wave of enlargement in 1999. As a former officer in the Securitate, the Communist-era predecessor of his own Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI), Mr Magureanu, 56, might not have been an acceptable figure to Nato, the papers suggested.

When asked on Bucharest radio whether there was any truth to these reports, the spy chief's spokesman, Nicolae Uliaru, said: "Probably, yes." However, he defended the SRI, which was set up in 1990 by the former president, Ion Iliescu, as an institution that respected democracy and had never broken the law.

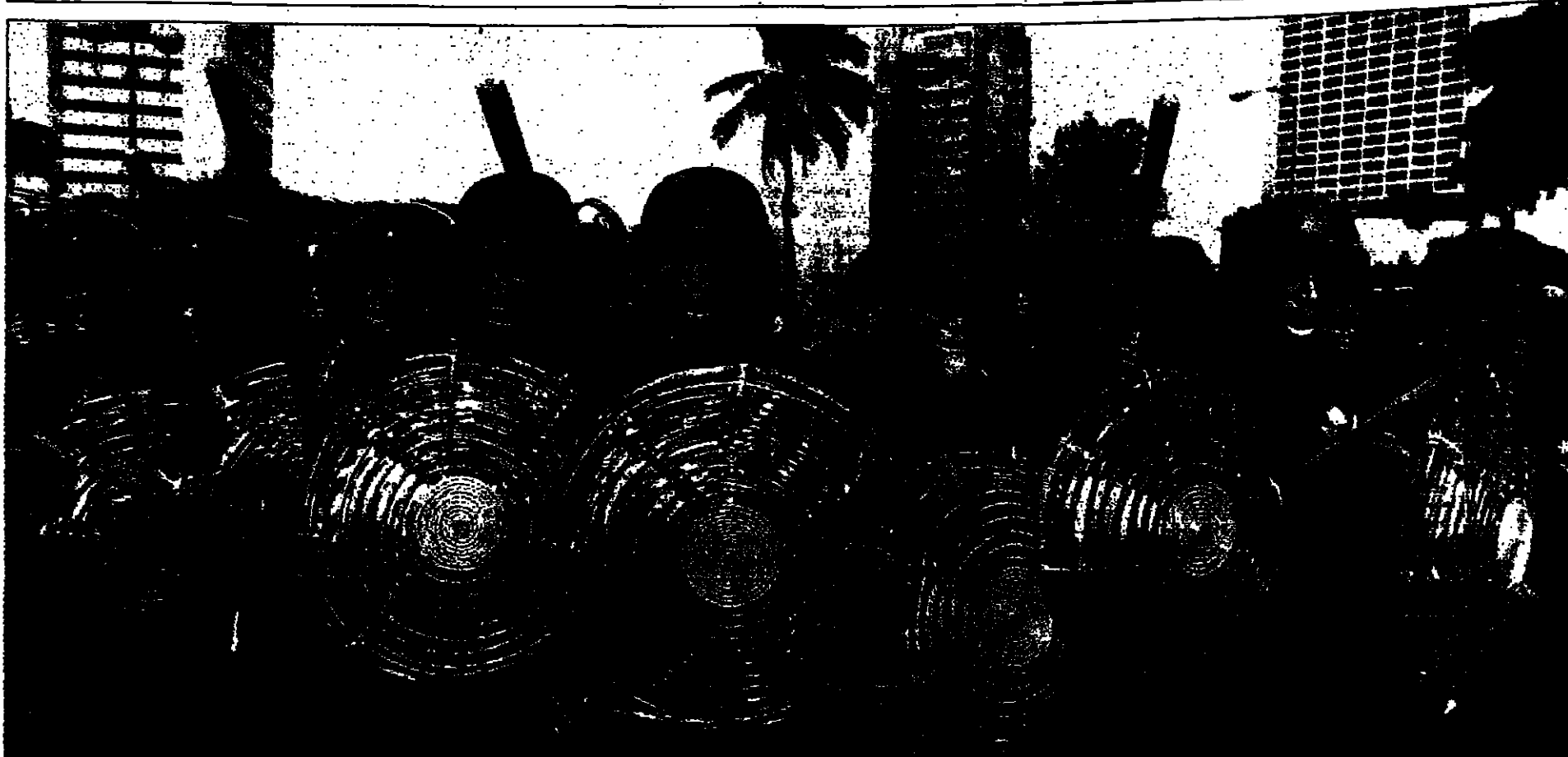
Mr Magureanu was a member of the self-styled jury that condemned the dictators Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu to death on Christmas Day 1989. Despite coming under attack for supposedly allowing Securitate methods to persist in the SRI, he kept his job while all other leading participants in the 1989 revolution fell from grace. Before last November's elections, in which Romania's liberal opposition came to power for the first time since 1989, Mr Magureanu said that he intended to resign regardless of the vote's outcome. However, it remains possible that there is more to his announcement this week than meets the eye.

Just three days before he handed in his resignation, the SRI publicly expressed fury at a Romanian newspaper, *Jurnalul National*, for publishing an article by a former Securitate boss and defector to the West, Ion Pacepa. This article, originally published in the *Washington Times*, accused Mr Magureanu and the SRI of abusing their power and undermining democracy. The SRI rejected Mr Pacepa's accusations and pointed out that he had loyally served Ceausescu as head of Romanian foreign espionage for many years before his defection. Mr Pacepa is perhaps best known in the West for his lurid memoirs, *Red Horizons*, which portray Ceausescu's Romania as an almost surreal world of corruption, depravity and violence.

The accuracy of Pacepa's book has since come under question. However, his knowledge of security matters lends more weight to his account of what was going on in the SRI under Mr Magureanu. Before last November's elections Western governments were unhappy with the degree of democratic change in Romania. Since then, relations have warmed, but perhaps not enough to guarantee Romanian entry into Nato in the first wave - with or without Mr Magureanu's resignation.



Virgil Magureanu: Resigned 'due to outside pressures'



Inhuman shield: An anti-riot squad taking part in the last of a series of exercises designed to safeguard the main business district in Jakarta, during elections next month. Indonesian leaders called for a peaceful run-up to the polls following weeks of violence between rival political factions in the Central Java province. Photograph: AFP

Tung learns the Chairman Mao strut

If body language tells a story, the body language of Tung Chee-hwa, who will head Hong Kong's first post-colonial government, tells a great deal.

When he was appointed at the end of last year Mr Tung was very much an avuncular uncle-figure, often dressed modestly in a cardigan and often seen listening with head bowed in humble and attentive mode.

Is this the same Mr Tung who is still smiling but, especially when attending meetings in China, is transformed into a finger-wagging and strutting official? "He even walks just like a Chinese official," said a Chinese journalist. "They all have their hands clasped behind their backs because Chairman Mao used to walk that way."

Body language aside, the millionaire former shipping magnate is beginning to sound far more like a Chinese government official than a local politician. In his earliest speeches as chief executive-designate, Mr Tung stressed that his priorities were "housing, education, welfare for the elderly, industrial development and economic vibrancy". However, he has spent the greater part of the last few months working on changes to public order and human rights laws, reflecting China's overriding concern about political control in Hong Kong.

As criticism has mounted of his plans to reintroduce old colonial public order laws, Mr Tung has become more extreme in justifying his actions. Speaking last week he said that the territory was "extremely vulnerable to external forces" and therefore needed to ensure "sufficient safeguards in our system to maintain law and order at all times".

But it has proved impossible to get Mr Tung's aides to provide instances of this supposed vulnerability or cite examples where "external forces" (a phrase frequently used by Chinese officials) have intervened to create instability in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong's boss is singing Peking's tune, writes Stephen Vines



Red star rising: Tung Chee-hwa, who many fear is a pawn of the Peking Communists. Photograph: Reuters

Mr Tung, who studied at Liverpool University and spent a decade working in the United States, appears to have been somewhat shaken by the experience. In the same speech he said: "When I was living in the West I experienced first-hand the deterioration of social order as Western society became more permissive... I do not want to see a Hong Kong which is permissive to the point where we start to surrender social order."

These dire warnings have left local people scratching their heads, trying to identify the problem which is clearly uppermost in Mr Tung's mind. They are not persuaded that their new leader's priorities are those of the Hong Kong

people. An opinion poll published a couple of weeks ago recorded 45 per cent of those questioned saying they had "less trust" in Mr Tung's determination to safeguard Hong Kong's interests. This compares with 30 per cent giving this answer when the question was asked in February.

Mr Tung has also caused dismay by insisting that political parties should not be allowed to receive foreign donations, nor have contacts overseas. When he admitted that he gave £50,000 to the Conservative 1992 general election campaign fund, he provoked further confusion by saying this was why he did not want to see the same sort of thing happening in Hong Kong.

Martin Lee, leader of the Democratic Party, says that on every single issue of importance to maintaining Hong Kong's autonomy, Mr Tung has taken the Chinese line rather than reflect local views.

Alan Castro, a local columnist with a reputation for bluntly articulating a pro-Peking line, sees Mr Tung's position differently.

In his view the problem is that the Western media refuse to recognise that Mr Tung enjoys a considerable degree of public support precisely because he expresses views which reflect the prevailing Chinese culture. "The rapport Mr Tung enjoys among his people has a lot to do with the natural integrity he

projects," according to Mr Castro. "He comes across enormously well in Chinese."

Indeed one of Mr Tung's more frequently stated themes is that of pride in Chinese values. "We need," he said, "to renew our commitment to the traditional Chinese virtues of modesty, hard work, persistence, magnanimity to foes, loyalty to friends, respect for seniors, emphasis on obligations rather than individual rights, and the willingness to sacrifice one's interest for the common good."

It would be wrong to underestimate the impact of remarks such as these. As Hong Kong finally ends the era of colonial rule, there is a strong feeling that the majority Chinese population needs to reaffirm its Chinese identity. There is considerable pride in finally being led by someone who speaks the same language and looks the same as the rest of the population.

At the same time Hong Kong people have developed a sophisticated appreciation of political affairs. Michael DeGolyer, director of the Hong Kong Transition Project, which tracks views about the hand-over of power, says that, contrary to prevailing myths, he has yet to come across another society in which there is such a high degree of political participation.

This means that although Hong Kong people are proud to have a Chinese leader, they are not prepared to be uncritical. They are watching carefully to see whether he will be a leader of Hong Kong or a conduit for Peking.

It is not even clear whether Mr Tung was his own man when it came to selecting members of his cabinet. Some Chinese sources say that at least one of his choices was vetoed because of supposed British connections.

It is far too early to deliver a verdict on Mr Tung's performance but it is clear that his honeymoon has given way to critical scrutiny of every move.

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NOVARTIS

مكتبة الأمل

Mobutu's old rival outflanked by rebels

Ed O'Loughlin
and agencies
Kinshasa

Time may be running out for Zaire's ailing President Mobutu Sese Seko, but it is running out faster still for his country's legal opposition movement.

As rebels close in from the east and the peace talks in South Africa are postponed once again, diplomats say the opportunities are dwindling for followers of the veteran opposition leader, Etienne Tshisekedi, to grab a meaningful stake in post-Mobutu Zaire. After two decades of sparring with Mr Mobutu, the former prime minister risks losing out to the rebel leader Laurent Kabila, who has seized half the country and is promising to depose Mr Mobutu by force if needed.

Mr Tshisekedi's supporters in the Democratic Union for Social Progress (UDPS) say if Mr Kabila does take power, democracy will have been beaten by force. Some still claim, usually in private, that Mr Kabila is a foreign stooge backed by ethnic Tutsis from Rwanda and Burundi and their allies in Uganda. If he takes over, they say, Zaire will be run by another Mobutu, with a different name.

If Mr Tshisekedi does fall at the last fence, his critics will say he only has himself to blame. They claim he has never been able to see beyond the events of 1991, when a largely self-selected gathering of the people called the National Sovereign Convention elected him head of an interim government.

The Convention and its interim government were supposed to prepare the way towards democracy, a transition forced on Mr Mobutu by the West. Instead, the wily President used an outbreak of mass looting

in Kinshasa as a pretext to fire Mr Tshisekedi and replace the Convention with another unelected parliament.

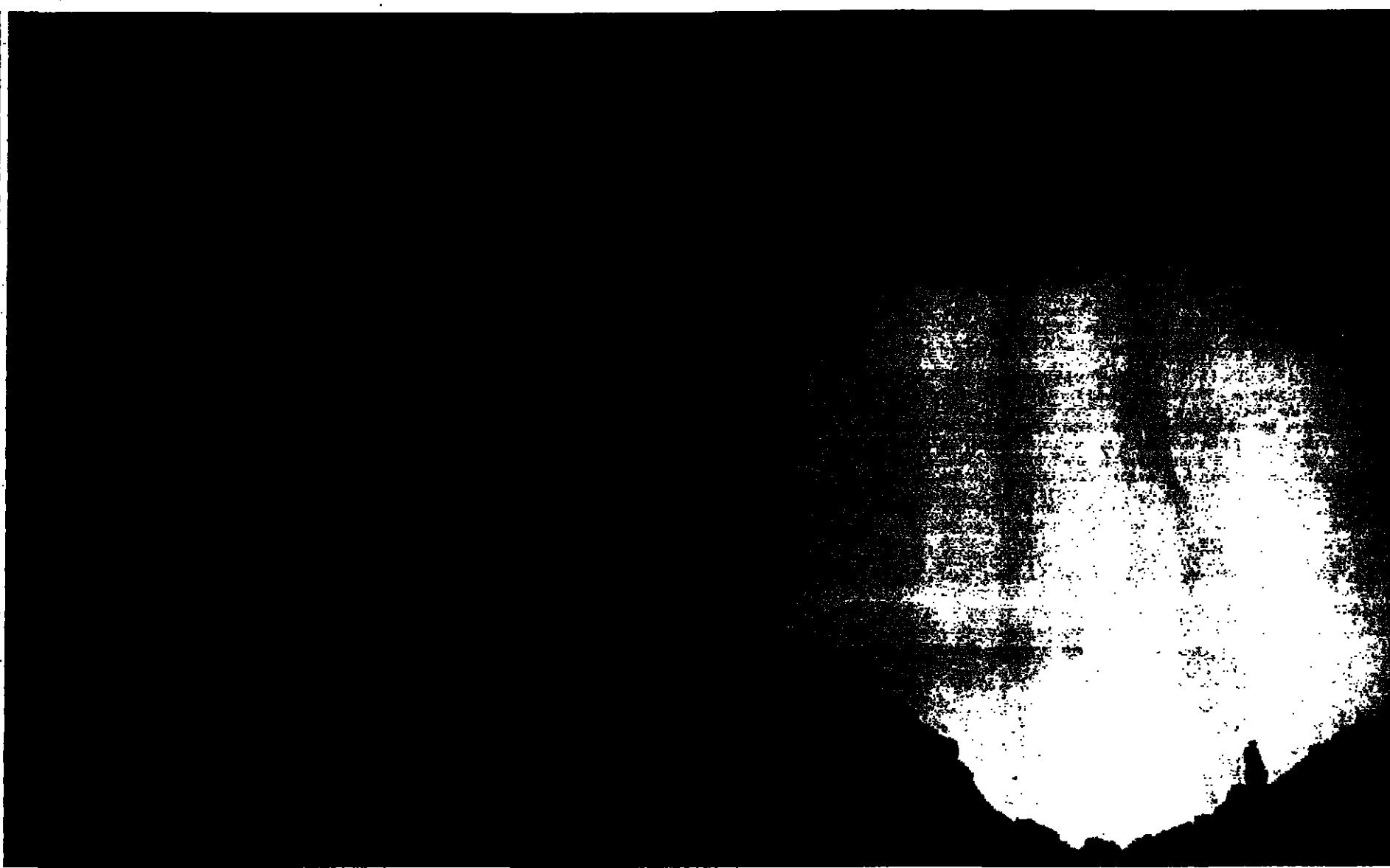
His quickly became a talking shop, where dozens of tiny parties were left free to squabble over the future of Zaire's democracy while Mr Mobutu and got on with plundering the country's mineral wealth.

In recent months, Mr Kabila's victories in the east appeared to weaken Mr Mobutu and strengthen parliament. Three weeks ago it nominated Mr Tshisekedi to resume his post as Prime Minister, believing he had the credibility to negotiate an end to the war. When Mr Tshisekedi announced that he was dissolving parliament and going back to the 1991 constitution, Mr Mobutu sacked him again, replacing him with military hardliner, General Lukulu Bolongo.

The stage seemed set for an upsurge in mass democratic action, but in the end, only a few thousand people, mainly students and the well-heeled political classes, demonstrated in Mr Tshisekedi's support. One diplomat said that while Mr Tshisekedi may have been imprisoned twice by Mr Mobutu, he had been a close supporter.

Meanwhile, in eastern Zaire, UN agencies mounted an aerial search for 80,000 Rwandan refugees and accused Mr Kabila's rebels of trying to achieve a "final solution" by condemning them to death.

The rebels said the former Rwandan Hutu troops and militiamen were evacuated from Kasese camp, 15 miles south of Kiangani. "Eighty thousand people are condemned to a slow and cruel death. The expression 'final solution' is not exaggerated," said a World Food Programme spokeswoman.



Georgian drama: The sun setting between the 13th-century Metekhi castle near Tbilisi and the monument to the city's founder, Vahang Gongasalli Photograph: Reuters

Spirit of Woodstock distilled for theme park

David Usborne
New York

Fancy a spin on Bob's Big Dipper? (Dylan, that is). A night at the Vanotel (Morrison), perhaps? If you want, you can get suites with authentic mud. Or how about a ride back in time on the Joni Express (Mitchell), destination 1969?

Welcome to Woodstock, the theme park. It does not exist, yet, but if businessman Alan Gerry has his way, it may not be a long time coming. He promises, though, that it will not be a "honky-tonk" affair. Nor will it be too enormous - in other words not of

Disney World dimensions.

What Mr Gerry, a cable television mogul, says he has in mind is a park that will attempt to recapture the counterculture spirit of the famed Woodstock music festival, that was attended by 40,000 people on open farmland in southern New York State 28 years ago.

That Woodstock occupies a special place in the American soul is unarguable. The festival featured virtually every leading rock band of the 1960s and has since come to represent the apotheosis of everything that was liberal about the decade, from flower-power to the anti-Vietnam movement.

Even now, each August anniversary attracts scores of pilgrims, most of them one-time hippies, to Woodstock.

Three years ago, a 25th anniversary concert was staged there also. Some remember the music, some the spirit of communalism and some the conditions at the concert - mud, mud and no sanitation.

Mr Gerry, who has bought the original site and a thousand acres around it, is uncertain what the park will offer. Possibilities, however, include train rides, reenactments, concert venues, multiple-screen cinemas and theme hotels.

"I want the site to exist in perpetuity," he said, "so generations will be able to come there and stand and experience what earlier generations experienced without having to get into a honky-tonk situation".

Reactions of those who were at the original Woodstock have so far been mixed. "It sounds pretty hokey to make a theme park out of our youth," commented one original concert-goer.

Officials of the surrounding county, however, are delighted. For them, a Woodstock theme park spells plenty of dollars.



Flowers in their hair: And mud everywhere - the proposed theme park will offer a taste of the Woodstock experience

Singer's lament for the Left Bank strikes a false note

They came to take away the corner grocer's and the intellectuals and artists said nothing. They took away the open-air market and the intellectuals said nothing. They banished the poor people and the immigrants to the suburbs and the intellectuals said little. They took away the Raoul Vidal record shop and the intellectuals grumbled slightly. Then they took away Le Divan, their favourite book shop, and the intellectuals and artists organised a protest movement. Or rather, in the finest traditions of French intellectuals, they had a split and started two protest movements.

This was the week that some of France's best-known, and best dressed, artists and intellectuals took up arms to save their ancestral home, Saint-Germain-des-Prés, from an alien invasion.

For years, designer clothes shops and exclusive boutiques, have been spreading across the river into the fashionable bohemian-left bank. Juliette Greco, the singer and actress, one of the few living links with Saint-Germain's great days in the 1950s, held a press conference on Tuesday to protest that enough was enough: she was starting a pressure group to save the neighbourhood.

The next day another pressure group, rejected by Ms Greco as too political, started up with the support of Jean-Paul Belmondo, Charles Aznavour and Catherine Deneuve. If you sit outside the Café de Flore, the spiritual epicentre of Saint-Germain, and pay 25 for a glass of beer, you may wonder what the fuss is about. Or rather why it did not begin years ago.

On the other side of the



Juliette Greco: Living link with the good old days

Boulevard, you see the building site where a Giorgio Armani fashion emporium is to be; the New Man boutique; a Belgian mussels-and-chips restaurant and Barclays Bank. On the terrace of the Café, where

PARIS DAYS

Sartre and de Beauvoir traded philosophical barbs, the dominant language is English: the main topic of intellectual conversation is shopping.

In truth, Saint-Germain-des-Prés stopped being a "fabulous literary crucible", as Ms Greco describes it, three decades ago. Sartre emigrated back to Montparnasse in the early 1960s. Its transformation into a snob-fashionable area is symbolised as much by the presence of those star names, paying star prices for their apartments, as by the invasion of famous labels.

But I have some sympathy for Ms Greco and the others. When I lived in Paris in the late 1970s, Saint-Germain-des-Prés still had a battered charm, full of

small book and record stores and tiny antique shops.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the landlords, with the City of Paris one of the worst offenders, doubled and trebled the rents and drove such places away. The Divan bookshop, a rabbit-warren of all that was classical, avant-garde or obscure, moved to the bourgeois 15th arrondissement last year. Its landlord, the Paris Town Hall, had demanded a rent rise.

The revolt of the rich and famous echoes, or parodies, many of the complaints of poorer or middle-income ex-Parisians, who have been pushed out into the suburbs in the last 10 or 15 years. They say Paris has become a museum for tourists and

a bazaar for the rich. They found themselves with their noses pressed to the window of their city, rarely able to join in the fun. So they moved out to the suburbs, where at least they had space and a few trees.

At the same time, Jacques Chirac, as Mayor of Paris, pursued a City of Westminster-style policy of encouraging the immigrant, the poor and trouble-some to move beyond the Boulevard Périphérique into the concrete wastelands.

All in all, there has been a sharp gentrification of Paris in the last two decades. The poorer neighbourhoods, once scattered through the city, are now concentrated to the north and east. One of my favourite places used to be the Marais, the once aristocratic area east of the centre, which was just beginning to rise to gentility after three centuries of dire unre-

spectability. In the 1970s, you could still find 17th-century town houses whose multiple courtyards had become sooty Dickensian agglomerations of tiny workshops, sewing bonnets, mending bicycles or printing leaflets. Strolling through the Marais is still fascinating; but it has now become a bastion of aggressive trendiness and the capital of Parisian gay culture.

It used to be possible to say that, unlike London, people lived right in the centre of Paris. It is still largely true. But the historic heart of the city, the first arrondissement, around the Louvre and Les Halles, has become almost as lifeless, out of working hours, as the City of London. Its population has fallen from 30,000 to 18,000 in three decades; partly because of the destruction of Les Halles (the Parisian Covent Garden),

and because of the deliberate Chiracian policy to make it a business and office ghetto.

Perhaps, one should not protest too much. Paris remains, compared to most big cities, a walkable, livable city, a low-rise city, a city with good and cheap public transport and, in most neighbourhoods, plentiful, specialist food shops. Some parts of Paris, such as the newly re-glided dome of the Invalides, look more splendid than they have for decades. But the city has, inevitably fallen victim to the late-20th-century banalisation and standardisation of towns and cities everywhere.

In Saint-Germain's case, instead of the tyranny of Benetton and the Gap it is the tyranny of Armani and Christian Dior.

John Lichfield

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Professor Leonard Forster

Leonard Forster was one of the best known and most distinguished German scholars of his generation, an internationally respected figure in German and Renaissance studies. He was a comparatist, not in any institutionalised sense, but in the awareness that literatures and cultures interrelate and that little is to be gained by studying them in isolation.

By aptitude and inclination a splendid linguist, he was as much at home in Renaissance Italian and French, neo-Latin, Dutch, later Czech, as he was in German, the language and subject which he professed. Thus Forster was one of that significant generation of Baroque scholars who broke with the national approach, so much favoured by the German school between the wars, and set this branch of studies on an international footing.

Yet Forster was a Cambridge man through and through. After Marlborough, he came up to

Trinity Hall to read Modern Languages. German studies were then, if not in their infancy, certainly not the established subject they are today. Forster remembered as an undergraduate attending the funeral of the first Schröder professor, Karl Bräul, little imagining that he was to be the fifth holder of that chair.

His real mentor was Trevor Jones, and it is a measure of Forster's linguistic capacities that the two of them first planned the great (and alas unfinished) dictionary that Jones later tackled single-handed. He once said that his failure to gain a First (having spent too much time on Italian) was the sole reason for his decision to embark on a German doctorate. German universities were, however, going through the rigours of political Gleichschaltung, and Forster, as a Lektor first at Leipzig, then at Königsberg, quickly became aware of its perils.

It was at Königsberg that he saw the eminent Renaissance scholar Paul Hankamer hounded out of office by the Nazis. In the relative security of Switzerland, from 1936 to 1938, he studied for the doctorate on Georg Weckherlin in England that he gained in 1938. In Basel, too, he met his wife, Jeanne, his companion and mainstay for nearly 60 years of happy marriage. Being the linguist he was, Forster spoke *Baseler Däitsch* like a native.

The war years saw him as a naval officer, eventually with the rank of lieutenant-commander, not on the high seas but in that high-powered backwater, Bletchley Park, engaged in intelligence work the significance of which has emerged in Sir Harry Hinsley's and others' account of code-cracking and Enigma. Bletchley proved to be a forcing ground for German studies: from there, the experts swarmed out to fill university chairs. Forster was no exception.

After a brief period as a lecturer in Cambridge and Fellow of Selwyn, the college to which he maintained his loyalty for more than half a century, he moved to the chair at University College London. His tenure there, from 1950 to 1961, was without doubt the climax of his career and a high point of teaching and research in German studies nationally. His inaugural lecture, *The Temper of Seventeenth Century German Literature*, remains to this day the finest short statement of the paradox of *vanitas* and *Lebensfreude* underlying that period. Many would wish that it might have been expanded into the monograph we hoped he would write; but he preferred shorter compass and briefer focus.

In London, too, he gave those memorable lectures on modern German literature (electrifying his hearers by reading aloud the newly published *Todesfuge* by Paul Celan) which attracted an audience from

well outside the confines of University College or the academic world.

Forster returned in 1961 to Cambridge to a somewhat muted triumph. He soon learnt, as have many before and since, that Cambridge can envelop and bind as well as offer scholarly satisfaction. German studies nevertheless flourished during the period of his tenure of the chair. It is perhaps significant that his years as Schröder professor were also a time of visiting professorships, in Germany, in the Netherlands, in Canada and elsewhere.

His real triumph was the presidency of the International Association for Germanic Studies (IVG) from 1970 to 1975, where his elegance, his urbanity, in short, his sheer style, prevailed in deliberations where entrenched opinions and ideologies might otherwise have raged. At the international conference held at Cambridge in

1975, over which he presided, extreme opinions were lost in the centuries-old atmosphere which he knew and loved so well. A nice personal touch was the *crèche* which his wife Jeanne organised for the children of those attending. He was a well-known figure at the German centre for Renaissance studies, the Herzog August Library in Wolfenbüttel, later a kind of senior citizen in that international place of scholarship and letters.

Forster's studies on Petrarchism, on neo-stoicism, on the Faust legend, on 17th-century Anglo-German literary relations, might not sit easily with his interest in nonsense (but "significant" nonsense) poetry and in the most recent literature coming from the old Federal Republic. Yet it was part of his breadth, his sense of responsibility for the whole subject, the awareness, almost lost today, that a German scholar cannot confine himself to narrow com-

partments (or forget that he is studying texts by real authors). Who else but Forster could have produced that Penguin anthology, *The Penguin Book of German Verse* (1957), which is still an important source for students and laymen alike, with its range from the Hildebrandlied to Celan? Who else could have received a Festschrift called *From Wolfram and Petrarca to Goethe and Grass*?

Roger Paulin

Leonard Wilson Forster, German scholar, born 30 March 1913; Fellow of Selwyn College, Cambridge 1938-50, 1961-97; University Lecturer in German, Cambridge University 1947-50, Schröder Professor of German 1961-79 (Emeritus); Professor of German, University College London 1950-61; President, International Association for Germanic Studies (IVG) 1970-75; FBA 1976; married 1939 Jeanne Billeter (one son, two daughters); died Cambridge 18 April 1997.



Forster: electrifying lectures

Fred Stiven

It is difficult to place Fred Stiven in any straightforward classification of Scottish artists. He worked simultaneously in the three areas of sculpture, painting and design.

A Fred Stiven "box" is a remarkable art work: it could be described as a "boxed relief". His boxes contained a form of three-dimensional still-life, excluding calm and order and a spiritual dimension. This could also be regarded as a form of landscape, focused on the tidal space of the shoreline. Looking carefully you could discern, in the carved wooden forms, the shapes of pebbles, seashells, driftwood and all manner of flotsam and jetsam.

The boxes are exquisitely crafted; their surfaces lovingly worked upon. Colour is used sparingly – occasionally a metal object adds tension. The forms are so interrelated that together they suggest the curve of a sand dune, a breaking wave and effects of wind and tide upon rock pools reflecting sunlight and shadow. They celebrate the artistry of the shipwright.

Stiven was one of Scotland's very few true modernist artists. He effectively resisted the repressive forces which have long bedevilled Scottish artists in their attempts to find recognition within the history of international 20th-century art. The fact that Stiven did not have

the opportunity to live or work outside Scotland makes his achievement as a full-blown modernist even more remarkable.

Like Ian Hamilton Finlay, Scotland's most famous contemporary artist, Stiven derived inspiration from the teaching of two quintessentially English artists, John Kingsley Cook and Leonard Rosoman. Stiven, with a fellow student, George Mackie, went on to be employed as a teacher at Gray's School of Art, in Aberdeen.

In the Sixties Ainslie Yule, an outstanding Scottish sculptor, taught alongside Stiven in the special experimental General Course in Design, working along similar lines to artists in Bucharest. When, for the first time, in 1968 Romanian artists were able to exhibit in Britain, they were warmly welcomed in Aberdeen, and artists of the calibre of Paul Neagu, Ion Bitzan and Horea Bernea entered into fruitful dialogue with Stiven and Yule.

In 1968 Stiven also made a

commitment to the interface between the worlds of art and science, confident that his art students would benefit from a deeper understanding of science. He collaborated with John Holloway, a lecturer in Chemistry at Aberdeen University (now Professor of Chemistry at Leicester University), to create an exhibition they entitled "Integration". Together they wrote an introduction to the exhibition catalogue. The first paragraph has the ring of a manifesto about it:

The eye rarely encounters any natural object of phenomena which is visually displeasing. Each line of the grains in a wooden plank seems inevitable, and in perfect harmony with every other line. The variety of arrangements of strata in a cliff face is endless, and yet each layer seems to belong to its neighbours. The arrangement of a bird's feather, and the interrelation of forms in a cloud bank reveal similar tendencies. Even when the scientist's tools are used to examine the natural world beyond the realms of ordinary sight the same underlying harmony is revealed.

Together they built 41 "boxes" containing the exhibits, on a limited budget of £300 made available from the university. The boxes contained a wide variety of imagery ranging from a model of the structure of sodium chloride, and a wasp's nest (cut away to show the construction of the honeycomb) to a reproduction of Leonardo da Vinci's drawing *A Deluge*, photographs of An-

tonio Gaudí's Sagrada Família Cathedral and diagrams revealing the basic engineering structure in the ceilings of Gothic churches.

Throughout the 'Seventies Stiven participated in the DeMarco Gallery's experimental Summer School and expeditions exploring the origins of Scotland's cultural heritage. One of the highlights for students was to be made welcome by Fred and his wife, Jenny, in their Aberdeenshire cottage at West-Tillyshoghe, close to the great prehistoric fortified settlement on the summit of the Hill of Eicht, and the standing stone circle of "Sun Honey". The cottage was a total art work, and contained ample evidence of Stiven's extraordinary draughtsmanship and his work as a book designer and illustrator, typographer and printmaker.

Stiven succeeded George Mackie as Head of the Design School at Gray's School of Art in 1981. It was with great reluctance that he took early retirement due to a debilitating illness in 1987. Common sense, wisdom, and a wry sense of humour were the essence of his successful teaching methods. He leaves behind many artists who were privileged to know him as their teacher, including Will MacLean, who has achieved international recognition. Stiven's election to the Roy-

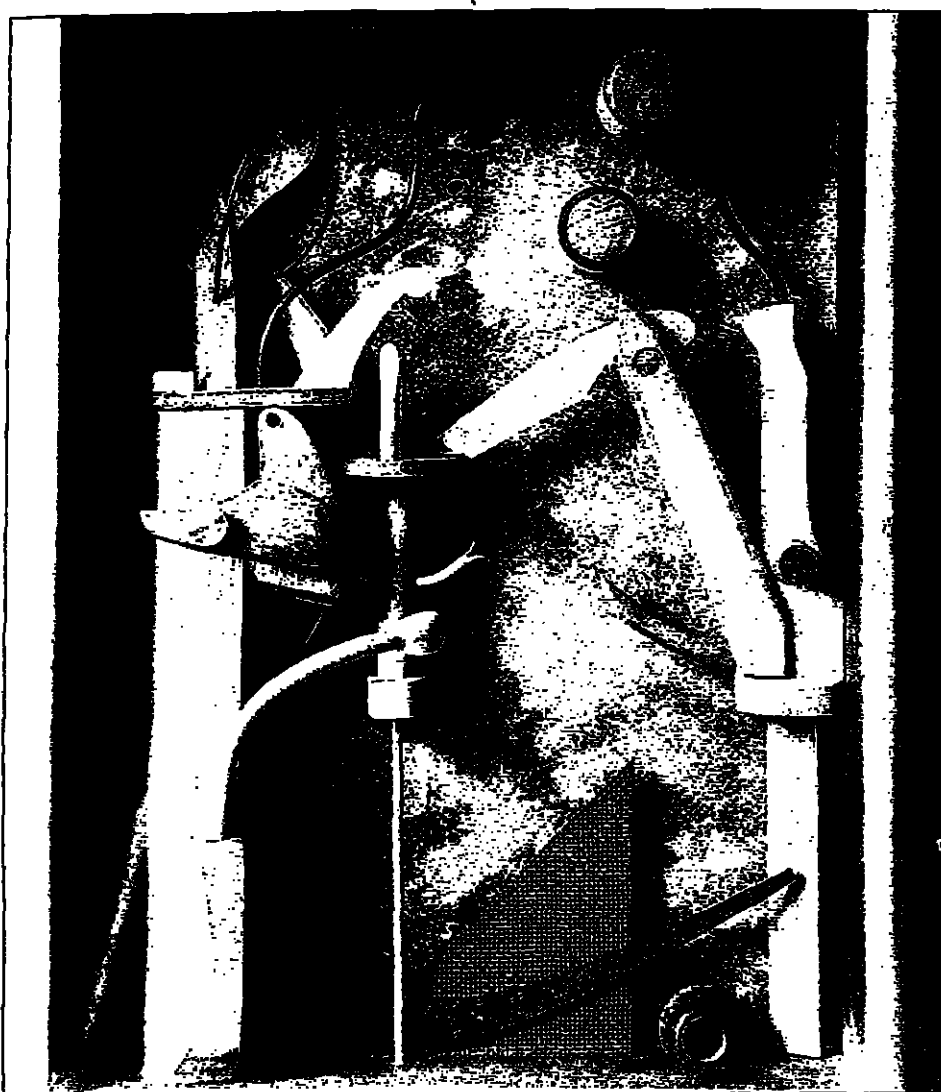
al Scottish Academy as an associate member and as a member of the Society of Industrial Artists reflected his capacity to focus his energies upon fine art whilst remaining dedicated to the task of educating his students to fulfil a useful role as designers in industry.

Stiven's boxes were displayed as an integral part of an impressive collection of art held at Gray's School of Art. In 1976 his first one-man exhibition in London was held at Paul Neagu's Generative Arts Gallery. The following year his work was exhibited at the Galleria del Cavallino in Venice alongside the "cutting edge" of Scottish contemporary artists, including Jack Knox, Ainslie Yule and Iain Patterson.

However, such was Stiven's humility that he did not seek fame or fortune: he was content to work steadily and quietly, gaining the respect of fellow artists. Just six weeks ago, he was eager to participate in the exhibition and conference on the theme of "Bridging the Gap between Art and Science" planned for the 1997 Edinburgh Festival.

Richard Demarco

Frederic William Stiven, artist, born 25 April 1929; married 1951 Jennie Paton (two sons, two daughters); died Dundee 1 April 1997.



Box by Stiven: a form of three-dimensional still-life, containing all manner of flotsam and jetsam

Charles Connolly

Charles Connolly was the only man in modern criminal history to survive being tried twice for the same murder.

He was accused in the Cameo case of 1949. The manager of the Cameo Cinema in Liverpool and his assistant were shot dead in the course of a bungled robbery by a masked gunman. Connolly was charged with being the lookout man (or "douse" in Liverpool-speak) who fled when he heard the shooting. Connolly denied it point blank. His alibi was that he had been at a church-hall hop taking part in a rumba contest.

The case set records. In the course of a ramshackle inquiry,

65,000 people were interviewed, 1,800 of them fingerprinted, 9,000 homes visited. After six months of floundering, the police finally arrested their first suspect, a small-time Liverpool villain called George Kelly, and charged him with murder. A dazed Connolly found himself being marched into the city's Napoleonic bridewell in the middle of the night to be accused as Kelly's accomplice. Connolly claimed he had been framed by a couple of low-life witnesses in cahoots with the police and insisted that he had never met Kelly in his life.

Theirs was then (in January 1950) the longest murder trial in English criminal history. But,

after 13 days, the jury was stumped and couldn't reach a verdict. Retrials were ordered, but separately this time; Kelly – defended by Rose (later Mrs Justice) Heilbrunn KC, making history as the first woman to lead for the defence in a murder trial – was convicted and sentenced to death. Still protesting his innocence, Connolly faced a similar fate. He was rescued from the hangman only when he was persuaded – literally on pain of death – to plead guilty to the lesser charge of robbery. Connolly's plea of not guilty to murder was accepted and he was jailed for 10 years.

Released in 1956, Connolly

returned to Liverpool and vanished into obscurity. There he might have stayed, but for a chance encounter in 1990 at a club near Liverpool where he was working as a part-time bouncer. Hearing his story, a retired local businessman became convinced of Connolly's innocence and offered to help him clear his name. The resulting publicity, including a BBC radio play by Bill Morrison, *Murder at the Cameo*, broadcast in March 1995, stirred some interest. But Connolly never overcame the problem of having pleaded guilty, albeit to a lesser charge, in order to save his own neck, and he was haunted by the effect his change of plea

might have had on Kelly's unsuccessful appeal.

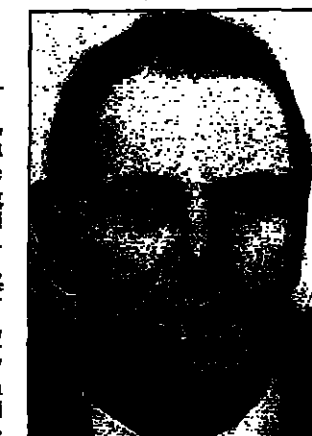
Charles Connolly was born in 1923, in Liverpool's old Chinatown. After school, he took a series of dead-end jobs before joining the Merchant Navy as a galley boy in 1939. In 1941, after a year ashore, he enlisted in the Royal Navy. Connolly's ships chased enemy submarines in the Indian Ocean and drew German artillery fire on D-Day. As an amateur boxer in the Navy, he took on 60 opponents and never lost a fight.

Indeed, Connolly characteristically led with his fists, and couldn't resist wading in if he saw a fight in the street. After the war, he ran up a couple

of convictions for brawling, which was how he was known to the Liverpool police. In the late 1940s he took labouring jobs where he could, and filled the rest of his time drifting between the snooker rooms, dance-halls and milk-bars of Lime Street.

Connolly was at Arnsley Gaol in Leeds when George Kelly was hanged at Liverpool in March 1950. Connolly recalled the execution morning. "The deputy governor, a Canadian, tapped me on the shoulder in the machine shop and said, 'You don't know how lucky you've been', and walked away. Just like that."

Roger Wilkes



Connolly: led with his fists

Charles Connolly, born Liverpool 18 May 1923; twice married (two sons, one daughter); died Liverpool 19 April 1997.

Herbert Zipper, conductor, died Santa Monica, California 21 April, aged 92. Formed a secret orchestra at Dachau concentration camp to raise the spirits of other prisoners. Later held prisoner in Buchenwald and by the Japanese in Manila. When Manila was liberated in 1945, he reassembled the Manila Orchestra.

Gerald Piaget, watch-maker, died Aarau, Switzerland 17 April, aged 79. Co-founded Piaget watches with his father and three brothers in 1942, making watch parts in the winter and farming in the summer; their first watch was produced in 1948. Brigadier Sir Geoffrey Hardy-Roberts, soldier and administrator, died 9 April, aged 89. Superintendent of Middlesex Hospital 1946-67. Master of the Queen's Household 1967-75.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

DEATHS

ABRAMSKI, Miriam (nee Nirenstein), deeply loved wife of Chaim, mother of Jack and Jenny, and grandmother of Sarah, Koby, and Maia, died peacefully on Sunday 27 April at 12.30pm at Jewish Reform Cemetery, Hoop Lane, London NW11. No flowers please.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

ALLEN, Guy and Natsia, 27 April 1957. With love on your Ruby Anniversary, from Tim, Didi and Andrew.

Announcements for Gazette Births, Marriages & Deaths (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2912 or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

Changing of the Guard

Following the Honorable Colonel Robert of the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am, 14th Battalion of the Household Cavalry, 11.30am, handover to the 1st Life Guard, 11.45am, 1st Battalion of the Household Cavalry, 12.00pm, handover to the 2nd Life Guard, 12.15pm, 2nd Battalion of the Household Cavalry, 12.30pm, handover to the 3rd Life Guard, 12.45pm, 3rd Battalion of the Household Cavalry, 1.00pm, handover to the 4th Life Guard, 1.15pm, 4th Battalion of the Household Cavalry, 1.30pm, handover to the 5th Life Guard, 1.45pm, 5th Battalion of the Household Cavalry, 2.00pm, handover to the 6th Life Guard, 2.15pm, 6th Battalion of the Household Cavalry, 2.30pm, handover to the 7th Life Guard, 2.45pm, 7th Battalion of the Household Cavalry, 3.00pm, handover to the 8th Life Guard, 3.15pm, 8th Battalion of the Household Cavalry, 3.30pm, handover to the 9th Life Guard, 3.45pm, 9th Battalion of the Household Cavalry, 4.00pm, handover to the 10th Life Guard, 4.15pm, 10th Battalion of the 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Joe Public, the lie-detector in the street

How is it that both John Major and Tony Blair sound more convincing when accusing the other of lying than they do when saying where they themselves stand? It has not been an edifying week of the election campaign, with words like "despicable" and "bare-faced" traded, both sides shouting "Pants on fire!" in their best grown-up voices, and Paddy Ashdown, as ever, shaking his head like a pained and disapproving teacher surveying the unruly playground.

But would the Conservatives scrap the state pension? It sounds possible, when set against Peter Lilley's ambitious and complex plans for recasting the basis of pension provision by the middle of the next century. Would Labour put up taxes in an July Budget? It sounds plausible, notwithstanding Gordon Brown's patient explanation that there are no hidden spending plans to require such a thing. There is a directness and a simplicity about the charges which make them sound as if they might express some kind of truth, even if they are not borne out by the formal policy positions of the two parties.

And it is, as Mr Major discovered yesterday, frustratingly difficult to rule out absolutely a hypothetical future decision. What if, he was asked, the Cabinet overruled him to abolish the state pension? "If anybody in my Cabinet actually prevailed in an argument, I would not only leave Downing Street, I would leave politics and I would call a general election," he

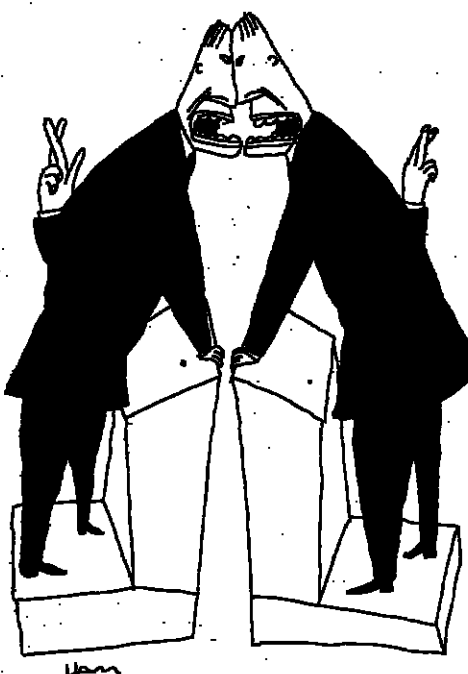
replied, finding himself perched rather awkwardly up a hypothetical gum tree.

Of course, it is grossly unfair to say that the Tories will abolish the state pension, when they want to replace it with a state guarantee of a pension of the same value. Mr Blair is playing with words. But, as our front page report confirms, he is not (quite) lying.

The Tories are scaremongering too. Mr Brown has to have a Budget in July in order to bring in his windfall tax (of as yet unknown size) on the privatised utilities, and to cut VAT on domestic gas and electricity from 8.5 to 5 per cent. To describe this as an "emergency" Budget, as Tory politicians do, is dishonest, and all Labour's pledges are indeed paid for either by the windfall tax or by clearly-labelled savings elsewhere. But to speculate that Mr Brown might make other tax changes at the same time is fair speculation and has not been denied.

The dangers of this kind of exaggeration and name-calling are obvious. The voters are already cynical and alienated. As Mr Blair often points out, negative attacks tend to induce apathy and a "plague on all their houses" mentality. But let us not become sentimental about this. After all, despite letting it be known that he had "ordered an end to negative campaigning" early on in the hustings, there is no sign of High Moral Tony now.

Anyway, election campaigns should be aggressive rather than sanctimonious affairs. Accusing the other candidate of lying is as old as democracy.



As Henry Mencken said: "Under democracy, one party always devotes its chief energies to trying to prove that the other party is unfit to rule. Both commonly succeed, and are right." He could have added, but didn't, that one is usually at least a little less unfit than the other.

No doubt Pericles had a few shocking words about his opponents' policy on the price of slaves when Athenians cast their pebbles in the earliest democracy. The founding fathers of American democracy called each other much worse than liars. John Quincy Adams called Thomas Jefferson a "slur upon the moral government of the world". Disraeli and Gladstone insulted each other with more wit and imagination, but certainly with as much contempt as Major and Blair.

Everyone knows, even if they sometimes pretend to a more elevated discourse, that politicians "go negative" because it works. American political scientists have even conducted experiments to prove that voters are more likely to remember negative information than positive virtues. That is because we voters are sceptical about politicians, and always have been. And so we should continue to be. Scepticism is part of the essential armoury we need to try to defend our interests. And we need, in the age of mass communication, to find new ways of assessing the reliability of our would-be leaders.

That is why this campaign has been so dominated by the respective struggles of Mr Major and Mr Blair to appeal directly for the trust of

the voters. All of politics nowadays is a search for sincerity, an attempt to construct authenticity in an age of mass communication. In the past 10 years, all politicians have taken to the "sincerity machine", or glass teleprompter. In this campaign they have realised that they look even more sincere if they can manage a planned ad lib, breaking off from the rostrum. Tony Blair's biopic was deliberately rough-edged, to try to convince us that it was more "real" than a glossier production. But as the politicians and their advisers construct, so their audiences deconstruct. We are communication experts, attuned to the tricks and artifices of film, just as earlier generations were familiar with the tropes of traditional oratory.

In the end, dodging through angry exchanges, and the mimicry of anger, spontaneous off-the-cuff explanations, and the mimicry of spontaneity; touching artlessness, and carefully prepared, learnt artlessness, we can only go on our guts, our instincts. We yearn to believe in character, and, despite ourselves and our long experience, we thirst for authenticity.

In the end, that is the saving grace of abusive press conferences and tetchy interviews. For as these men get angrier, they expose more of themselves. Pressed by impertinent interviewers, they sometimes forget their training and preparation. The guard slips, a flash of more than make-up can be seen glowing on the cheek. We may tut-tut, but we watch these moments avidly. For time is running out and watching is our duty.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Absence of debate on how to counter potential conflict in Europe

Sir: Jacques Santer's challenge to Euro-sceptics everywhere ("Santer scores the 'prophets of doom'", 22 April) has exposed an anomaly in the British election campaign which requires explaining. Namely, the total absence of serious debate on what is arguably one of the major issues of our time: Europe's common foreign and security policy.

While it is generally recognised that the failure to stop the genocidal war in Bosnia represented a massive defeat for Europe's institutions, there is in Britain scant acknowledgement of the need for a co-ordinated and consistent policy within the EU to counter further potential conflict in Europe.

Whilst Europe is divided, the lowest common denominator will continue to prevail. The result of this is already evident in Albania where the heightened political unrest is currently being met by an *ad hoc* Italian-led mission to escort aid, followed by new elections. But what happens if that is not enough, and the trouble in Albania spills over the borders into Kosovo? Or Macedonia? And what about the rising tensions

between two Nato powers, Greece and Turkey, on the Aegean?

In Bosnia, too, there is much unfinished business. Britain has nearly 6,000 troops there and, with America scheduled to pull its troops out of Bosnia next year, is it not in Britain's national interest to join its EU partners in devising a united strategy to avoid a larger conflagration on Europe's south eastern flank – and possibly the eventual Balkanisation of Europe, as new spheres of influence form in the continuing vacuum of political authority?

The EU common foreign and security policy is likely to impact on longer-term peace in Europe, and closer political and military integration is supported by the majority of EU member states. It is surely the right of the British people to know precisely where the parties stand on this important issue, and to participate in an overdue debate.

CAROLE HODGE
Research Associate
Institute of Russian and East European Studies
Glasgow University

Sir: So France too is to hold parliamentary elections. In his television announcement, which amounted to a campaign manifesto, President Chirac made a ringing endorsement of the advantages for France of the European Union and the single currency, in the manner of those past British leaders of both main parties who campaigned for Britain's accession to the Union in the Sixties.

It is true that [Europe] sometimes imposes constraints. But never forget, for half a century, for our old nations who have so often fought one another, Europe is peace. Today, in a world that is organised and transformed ever more rapidly, Europe brings us additional prosperity and security simply because Europe is union, and union makes for strength.

... Important decisions are to be made in the very next few months: transition to the single currency, an essential step if we want to assert ourselves as a great economic and political power, with a euro equal to the dollar and the yen; reform of the European institutions which we want to make more democratic, more balanced and more

effective; enlargement of the Union to include the young democracies which belong to the European family, and from which we, the greater Europe, reform of the Atlantic alliance, which must allow the Europeans to take better responsibility for their security, in a new sharing with the Americans; and especially, something which most concerns me, a European Union in the service of the people.

The advantages of the Union to France cannot be different from those it holds for Britain. President Chirac's objectives of building "a Europe respectful of the genius of the nations that compose it", and of enlargement to include the young democracies, are close enough to those the present British government purports to embrace.

Why cannot the British election campaign give leadership to the electorate instead of grubbing for votes in the gutter of xenophobia? Apart from Kenneth Clarke, Sir Edward Heath and the Liberal Democrats, there seem to be no statesmen left in Britain.

STUART WHYTE
Feucherolles, France

Pensioners' plight worsens

Sir: At last pensions have come to the forefront of the political agenda (election '97: "Blair attacks pension proposals", 25 April). It was bound to happen. There are 10.2 million very disgruntled pensioners out there and when all the sound and fury of the exchanges has subsided they will remember which political party has deprived a single pensioner of £21 a week and a married pensioner couple of £33 a week.

They will remember that 1.5 million of their contemporaries are claiming income support because their pensions are so low. That a further million are believed to be entitled to income support but not claiming it, and living in poverty. That 7 million pensioners do not receive sufficient income to pay income tax, and that year on year their plight will get worse.

They will remember whose policies over the past 18 years have brought this about. They will surely vote accordingly.

CLIFFORD FULLER
Gloucester

LETTER from THE EDITOR

John Major is upset with us for a mean caricature of him that we published on Thursday. It illustrated some words of his, remarkable words, that appeared to repudiate some part of his own party's reputation in favour of an eyeball-to-eyeball relationship with the voter. Here they are again: "Don't let whatever doubts you may have had about the Conservative Party in the past weigh with you, when the future of the United Kingdom may be at stake. Think about it. Think seriously. Think again. Look in my eyes and know this. I will always deal fair and true by this great nation."

Many will find the words moving. I, frankly, found them creepy. Anyway, the paper was mildly satirised by BBC's *Newnight* programme because the words quoted were not actually spoken by the Prime Minister – he departed from his text, as he is doing increasingly often. So I owe readers an explanation. The words were in a written text released to journalists as Mr Major's "We checked with Conservative Central Office: were they happy to stand by them, to have them quoted? Yes, yes, very happy. So we went ahead. This still seems to me to be perfectly reasonable. But it raises the question, I suppose, of what words a politician owns. For television, anything that cannot be filmed does not exist. Words on paper are spectral, unreal; words spoken to camera are real. For writing journalists, words are words are words. Readers can make up their own minds.

A very strange thing happened yesterday. As I was walking to lunch, my fingertips started to fiddle with my hair. A distant thrumming, drumming sound began. Almost imperceptibly, the pavement around me began to darken. From it, there came a sharp, lemon-and-urine smell that seemed vaguely familiar. Around me, people stretched their necks backwards and held their palms out, like saints in Old Master paintings. What the hell was going on? After a few moments of intense concentration, I realised it was that almost forgotten phenomenon "rain", a form of atmospheric precipitation that has not been known in these parts for a long

As Londoners did their traditional rain-dance, I realised why the weather had changed – it is the start of the cricket season

Connolly post-Eton and Oxford thus: "(he) spent the rest of his life collecting advances for books never written and bumbling around as a freelance journalist, meeting people and having a good time, until he settled on *The Sunday Times*, explaining his angst to anyone who would listen." This strikes me as a good description of how most of the really worthwhile and interesting people I know behave even now – except, of course, that it wouldn't be *The Sunday Times* they settled on.

Andrew Whitam-Smith, our founder-editor, wrote an excellent meditation this week on the truths that are revealed by photo-journalism, as distinct from words-journalism. He didn't know it, but timely confirmation of his view comes in today's magazine, where you will find a description in pictures of the Conservative Party that is compelling and irrefutable.

Andrew Marr

QUOTE UNQUOTE

A long debilitating haul, beginning in the sticks and ending up in the shadow of Big Ben. Thousands competing, some for money, some for charity, and the usual selection of fruit-cakes, chickens, cross-dressers and familiar faces – Rory Bremner, comedian, comparing the general election to the London Marathon.

MPs get far too much and they line their own pockets as well – Alan Clark, *Conservative candidate for Kensington and Chelsea, to a pensioner in the constituency*.

Speaking on a public platform comes not from liking the sound of your own voice but from seeking the sound of your own heart – Anita Roddick, *founder of the Body Shop*.

No one can be a leader of men, can sway with lofty oratory or clarify his troops while his tubes are rumbling with eruptions – Roy Porter, *Professor of the History of Medicine at the Wellcome Institute, on indignation*.

The first thing that came into my head was, 'Now my life will end' – Morihisa Aoki, *Japanese ambassador to Peru, on hearing the first explosions that led to the end of the embassy siege in Lima*.

Why would I talk about the men in my life? For me, life is not about men – Catherine Deneuve, *actress, who is writing her autobiography*.

When your name ends in a vowel, you end up carrying a gun: lot – Anthony LaPaglia, *actor, describing his gangster roles*.

Green Party offers long-term solutions

Sir: Sara Parkin ("Support goes to greenest candidate", 23 April) gave her reason for withdrawing from the Green Party as its failure to think strategically about how to work in the British electoral system.

On the contrary, the Green Party has a very clear vision of how to work in that system, and is doing so with growing success at local level. That vision just doesn't happen to be the particular approach that Ms Parkin sought to impose.

The Green Party is building its support through local work and campaigning. There are hundreds of Green candidates in the English county council elections which coincide with the general election on 1 May. Greens are standing in selected parliamentary constituencies across the UK, to give the opportunity to put the green arguments in the general election, on key issues such as the economy, education, the environment and health.

The Green Party remains the only party committed to the ecological perspective, seeking a future for all of us which will last. This requires fundamental change in economic, social and environmental policies. Candidates of other parties may offer palliatives, but not the long-term solutions that are needed.

JOHN NORRIS
Richmond upon Thames, Surrey

Making the most of our libraries

Sir: In his piece on public libraries, Thomas Sutcliffe has again hit the spot (Tabloid, 24 April). As an academic librarian and husband of a thriller novelist (Lindsay Townsend) I may be a touch biased, but isn't it a little strange that a nationwide system of information and entertainment with 30 million registered users should be made to feel unwanted?

The ability to try out a wide range of books without having to pay cash up front is far more than half the population a major contribution to education and leisure. What is more, the tastes formed by borrowing from libraries frequently develop into cash sales at bookshops. Public libraries are a national asset and a cultural stimulus, so let's start treating them – and funding them – as such.

ALAN QUICKE
Huddersfield, West Yorkshire



Stonehenge: worshipped by our pagan ancestors

Pagan faiths excluded from the Sacred Land project

Sir: While it was good to read Paul Valley's article which publicises the work of the Sacred Land project ("The sacred sites of Britain", 22 April), it is hard to express the dismay which I and other pagan women must feel on reading his article.

We are fortunate in Britain to be the inheritors of many places made sacred by the worship of our ancestors – our pagan ancestors. These include some of our best-known tourist spots, such as Stonehenge, Avebury and Silbury Hill; as well as lesser-known spots such as the well of St Mary's

Willesden, whose patron pagan goddesses were later incorporated into masculine-dominated Christianity in the form of black virgins and saints.

For decades before the creation of the Sacred Land project, pagans in Britain have been campaigning for both the protection of these sacred sites and for respect for them as places of peace, meditation and veneration. Why is it then that pagan religion, which is goddess-venerating and the religious faith of many thousands of people in Britain – women and men – has no representation on the Sacred Land

project, and that no representative of the pagan faiths has been invited to attend the ceremony today led by the Archbishop of Canterbury?

For centuries women and the goddesses have been excluded from any voice in mainstream religion. It seems that the Sacred Land project intends to perpetuate this. How strange when for so many people the Earth and its sacred sites are so strongly associated with the Divine as goddess and not god.

Dr VIVIANNE CROWLEY
Interfaith Committee
The Pagan Federation
London WC1

Noisy music is dangerous to aural health

Sir: Further to Lilian Simlett-Moss's letter (24 April), may I echo her question, why do we permit dangerous levels of sound in public entertainment? I write as one who listened to the Rolling Stones' Cardiff Arms Park concert from the steps outside the stadium, having been forced to leave my husband, friends and (expensive) seat because of my discomfort.

But another aspect of this "noisy music" phenomenon causes disagreements in our house. I

maintain that, both on the radio and television, the sound level increases for musical bits of otherwise non-musical programmes. My husband and son say it's just my paranoia about noise. Does anyone agree with me?

MAIRA GAUNT
Cardiff

Sir: The health risks in loud discos and concerts are even worse than generally realised (letter, 24 April). Many people, usually the young, suffer life-long incurable tinnitus

after being exposed to 120 decibels or more.

The fragile human ear is not built for such aural assaults, yet pop music promoters remain outside the sound safety laws which govern places of work. The constant roar of tinnitus is invisible and therefore ignored by governments, with no money being spent on research and treatment ignored in most NHS hospitals.

MICHAEL O'TOOLE
Director, Tinnitus Action
London SE18

Admission for all to church schools

Sir: Your continuing concern over the "scandal" of parents "falsely claiming religious beliefs to gain admission to church schools" is misplaced (report, 22 April). The real scandal is that church schools, funded out of the public purse, are denying access to the children of secular parents.

In so far as these schools feature amongst the best, secular children are being forced to choose between poorer schools. Yet children from a religious background face no bar to entering the very best secular schools; imagine the outcry if non-church schools tried to deny entry to the children of church-going parents on religious grounds.

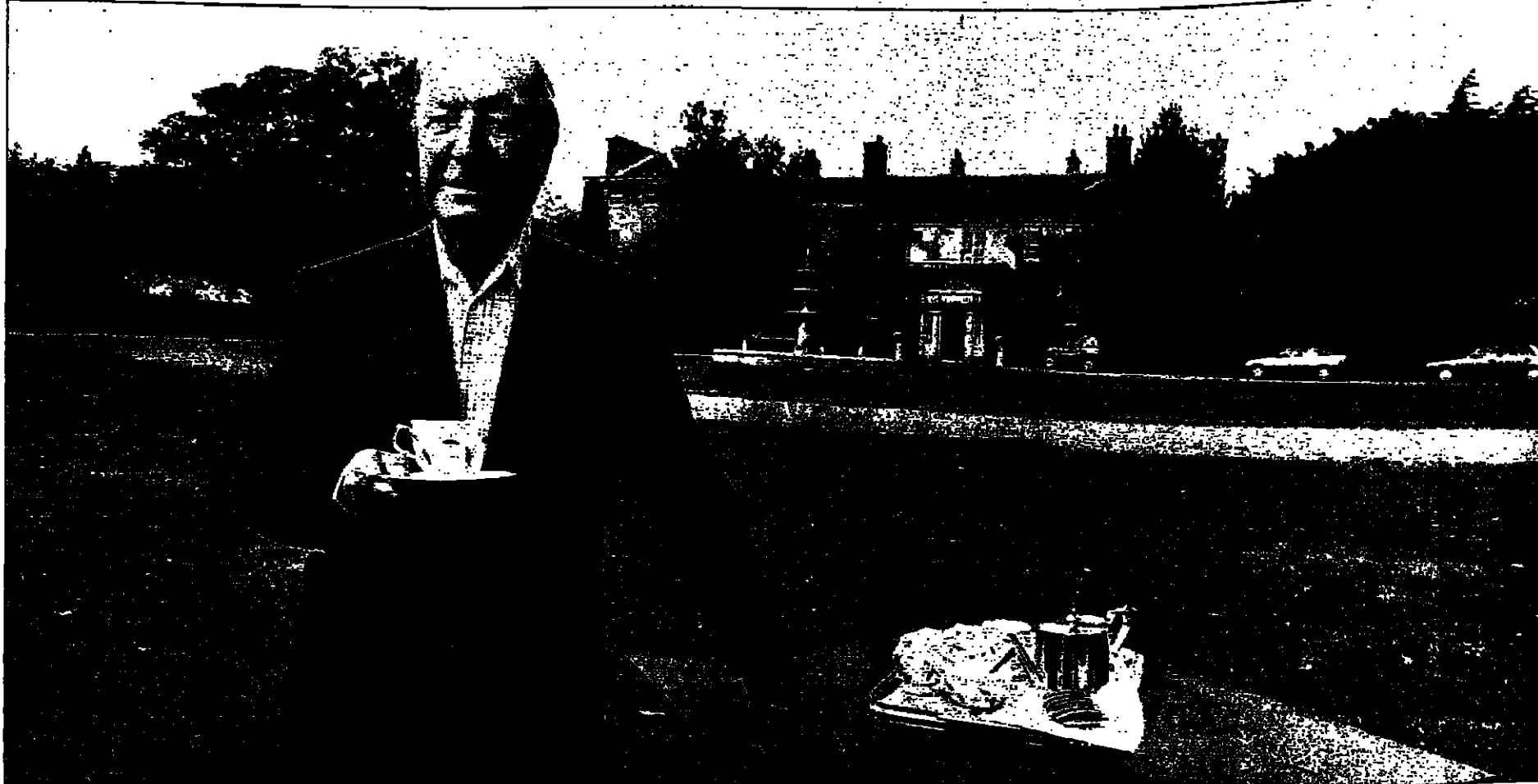
TERRY MARSHALL
Norwich

Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. (Fax: 0171-293 2435; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) and include a daytime telephone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

The politician who lives like a prince



Haughey meets the stores magnate Ben Dunne, 'a walking Santa Claus', in 1986, and (right) the former Taoiseach at his country mansion. Photographs: Eamon Farrell/Photocall



Charles Haughey has a legendary ability to survive. But five years after leaving power he has been implicated in a Dublin payments scandal that threatens his political legacy, says Alan Murdoch

An American commentator once described a US politician, Edward Livingston, as "a man of splendid abilities but utterly corrupt. Like rotten mackerel by moonlight, he shines and stinks."

Generations of Irish have grown up simultaneously loving and loathing Charlie Haughey, a political colossus whose career has dominated modern Irish history. His cabinet role spanned 30 years in a career extending from the Fifties to the Nineties. Macmillan was in Downing Street when he entered office. John Major when he left.

Yet despite cleverly steering Ireland, often against considerable conservative obstacles, towards European modernity, events this week mean his name is now more likely to be remembered for scandal and crisis than statecraft. As a series of extraordinary revelations laid bare the furtive financial arrangements that permitted him to live more as a prince than politician, the mysterious aura that for 30 years surrounded his regal style slid was replaced by humiliation and farce.

That this is happening now, almost five years after his exit from power, quoting Shakespeare's *Othello* to the Dail ("I have done the state some service; they know't. No more of that") is the supreme irony. On countless occasions in government or when leading his Fianna Fail party in opposition, Haughey's cunning and brazen hard

neck saw him tough it out when his political obituaries were already written, and, more than once, actually printed.

From the start he behaved as if hovering above mere mortals, secure on an imperious cloud of invulnerability. He astutely married the prime minister's daughter, Maureen Lemass. He bought and sold north Dublin land for lucrative housing estates.

His brash coterie turned the austere nationalist Fianna Fail, founded in 1927 by Eamon De Valera, initially a small farmers and urban masses movement, into a party leaning more towards property speculators and developers, while also advancing welcome social reforms, notably for women.

There were regular lunches for the "Taca" club of business benefactors, who not-so-mysteriously won favour on government work. Donogh O'Malley, the education minister who brought in free secondary education, was ever candid: "When all other things are equal, we give it to our people."

Haughey's young Fianna Fail party cohorts were known as the "men in mohair suits". With the late Brian Lenihan and Donogh O'Malley, Haughey regularly drank late at the old Hibernian Hotel in Dawson Street, chased women and became legends of indulgence. The devil-may-care O'Malley, after driving the wrong way down a one-way street, was stopped by a garda. Asked "Did you not see the arrows?" He replied, "To tell the truth

guard, I didn't even see the feckin' Indians."

Haughey himself liked showing female visitors the bull sculpture on his office window sill and explaining its virile significance.

In 1970, after a Dublin cabinet sub-committee's plan to assist beleaguered northern Catholics collapsed in bitter acrimony, he was sacked as finance minister and charged, in the infamous Arms Trial, with gun-running. Many felt Taoiseach Jack Lynch had simply bottled out and deserted his own ministers. Lynch himself had publicly made plain that Dublin could not "stand by" while attacks were made on Catholic areas in Northern Ireland. The importation of arms from Europe into Dublin followed pleas from democratic nationalist politicians in Northern Ireland, and was intended to help Catholics defend themselves from attack. When the plan was leaked in suspicious circumstances, a disapproving Dublin Department of Justice official intervened, leading to Haughey's arrest.

Haughey, who could have defended his involvement and won, denied the charges and was acquitted. Thereafter, there hung around him what one observer neatly dubbed "the whiff of cordite". Cast into the political wilderness until 1977, he toured the country acquiring a republican halo in the eyes of a fanatical following, matched only by a total mistrust from vehement opponents. "I wouldn't give him the itch if I thought he'd get warm on a cold day scratching himself," declared one voter in a 1982 election canvass.

After unseating Lynch as Fianna Fail leader in 1979, vain attempts followed to achieve a Northern Ireland settlement. Haughey wooed Margaret Thatcher with a Georgian silver teapot and talk of major "institutional" or

"constitutional" change. The 1981 hunger strikes saw Haughey's own sons physically attacked by militant H-block campaigners furious at his refusal to take their side.

Never secure as party leader, discontent grew over some dubious front-bench appointments and the bizarre 1982 discovery of a murderer in his attorney general's flat. A split came in 1986 when Haughey sided with Catholic conservatives against freely-available contraception, and after he acceded to a "pro-life" anti-abortion line and, initially, opposed parts of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Coalition in 1989 with former enemies now in the new Progressive Democrats alienated more party veterans, culminating in the ruthless sacrifice of Lenihan, his oldest friend, at the behest of that party.

But there were plusses. One-sided professional Haughey-haters ignore the fact that his 1987-92 governments were visionary architects of today's "Celtic Tiger" revival. Far-sighted development policies then re-directed a low-margin, food-based economy towards new hi-tech activities - from computers to film, financial services to entertainment, international telesales to tourism.

This encouraged ambivalence. People with no illusions about Haughey's opportunist nature still believed he was good for the country and felt uplifted by his staunch patriotism. They set his Mitterrand-inspired grand projects against the dreary jobless austerity and hyper-taxation through which Garret Fitzgerald all but bankrupted Ireland in the mid-Eighties.

They also chuckled at the unashamed grandeur of Haughey's home life. Perennial gossip about his enjoyment of female company (he once confided, *sotto voce* "I love sex") and his slightly absurd apeing of gentry with his riding stables, 280-acre estate, Georgian man-

sion, and yacht, topped off with the purchase of a private Atlantic island, Inishvickillane, in the Baskets off Kerry. One of his three sons also acquired a busy helicopter firm.

A recent 70th anniversary history of Fianna Fail considers how wealth might have come his way. After highlighting the accountancy firm Haughey set up after graduating, it adds: "An old house, which needed a lot of upkeep and refurbishment, like Abbeville (Haughey's mansion) could be picked up at a relatively modest cost in the Sixties, as few people wanted such properties. (His) success was largely achieved by his own efforts, as opposed to that achieved with the assistance of the comfortable connections that tend to come with inherited wealth or position."

A rather different account of how Haughey sustained this life began emerging this week at the Dublin Castle tribunal that has been investigating payments to politicians by Ben Dunne, when head of his family's Irish and British chain of 95 supermarkets and clothing stores.

Haughey's accountancy firm has featured in the inquiry. A former colleague there, the late banker Des Traynor, was named by Dunne as the "bagman" who in 1988 approached Dunne's accountant seeking help in defraying Haughey's then £700,000 debts. By 1991, Dunne, a walking Santa Claus worth £150m, had bailed his free-spending prime minister out to the tune of £1.3m. Witnesses to the tribunal said that the initial payment of £500,000 in July 1988 was followed by £150,000 and £200,000 in 1989 and 1990. Dunne agreed that Haughey never intervened on his or his firm's behalf, and himself never sought political favours.

Haughey, now 71, has declined to be legally represented at the tribunal. In correspondence with lawyers acting for

Dunne's Stores' new management, seeking repayment of the allegedly improper payments, he flatly denied receiving funds from Dunne's or an associate company.

Most memorably, Dunne, who quit the firm four years ago (documents aired in his acrimonious departure led to the payments scandal becoming public last November) revealed that in 1991 he dropped in for a cup of tea with the former Taoiseach at Abbeville after a game of golf and, seeing a "broken-looking" Haughey, spontaneously gave him three unsolicited bank drafts worth £210,000 made out in fictitious names, saying, "Here's something for yourself." Haughey had replied "Thanks, big fella," the businessman told the stunned tribunal which, packed by an eager public, seemed more shocked that someone would suggest dropping in on the fiercely intimidating presence for tea than at his receipt of funds beyond his salary.

Given Haughey's lifestyle, many now wonder if Dunne was unique as a large-scale personal benefactor. They recall his close alliances with a series of business figures.

The volatile Dunne's generous side meant that if you met him on a good day you might come home loaded. He gave £2m to charities and helped several parties. Dunne confirmed that the present Taoiseach, John Bruton, visited him for tea and received a £100,000 donation for his Fine Gael party.

The Irish government coalition of Fine Gael, Labour and Democratic Left hope Fianna Fail will be seriously damaged by the affair. Fine Gael has itself suffered collateral damage, seeing its transport minister resign last November. Seasoned observers expect that a general election will be called when maximum damage has been done to Fianna Fail's electability. Haughey's gilt-edged living may cost his party dearly in votes for years to come.

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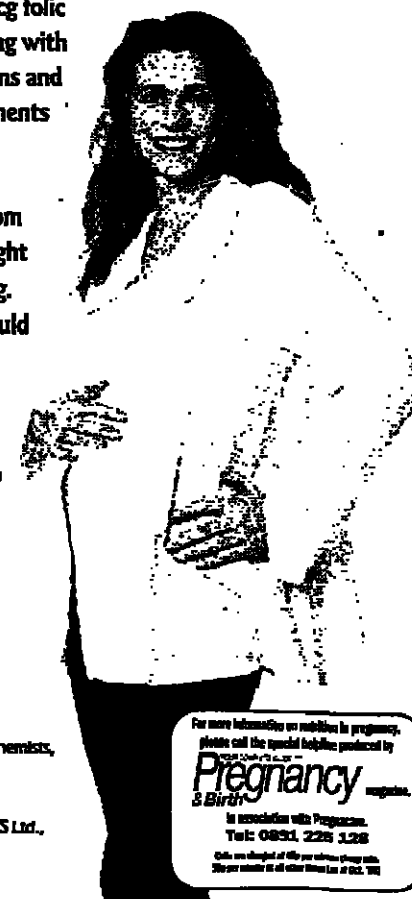
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jo brand's week

Make

Graham Greene, the writer, was one famous person who had a *doppelgänger* who popped up all over the world for years, saying he was the author and reaping benefits as he went. The reason this sort of thing happens, I think, is because people are so gullible. Most of us tend, for no other reason than assuming most people tell the truth, to believe what we hear.

I'm afraid I have to include myself in the ranks of the gullible, as I fell into the trap many have, when I was quite happy to believe a bloke who introduced himself to me at The Comedy Store as the keyboard player from the band, Dodgy.

Coincidentally, my tour manager John has worked quite a lot with Dodgy, driving the tour bus and doing security, and so it seemed reasonable to ask this bloke if he knew John.

"Never heard of him," said our friend cheerfully, and went on to demonstrate that he also had a very poor knowledge of the band and what they had been up to. For example, the lead singer ("he's called Graham really but he never uses it") is in fact called Nigel. I'm afraid

we soon tired of our drunken friend and packed him off to the pub with some of the other performers from the show, where he continued to irritate them until closing time. When they could stand it no longer, they all sneaked out while he was in the toilet. Rules of impersonation: 1) learn your stuff; 2) don't be so irritating that people can't wait to escape from you.

Selina Scott got a bit of a roasting in the press this week because she earns so much money. Her situation demonstrates in many ways what the shortcomings and hypocrisies of the media are. First of all, if these people at Sky are prepared to pay her that much, more fool them.

Secondly, Ms Scott's argument that she is a working mother with no security, so we should sympathise with her mega pay packet, doesn't wash. She's probably got enough in the bank as we speak to keep her very comfortable for the rest of her days. Thirdly, the argument that only high ratings deserve big bucks is sending us down that road of attempting to appeal only to the bring-back-hanging, Sun-reading brigade that has

quite enough influence already, thank you very much. There are many superb programmes on telly that don't necessarily get huge ratings. Hope someone powerful from Channel 4 is reading this.

I have always thought that the phrase "champagne socialists" says far more about the people who use it than those at whom it is directed. I imagine the term was coined by people who simply cannot believe that those who have got their hands on the god that is money don't just want to make more and more and turn their luxurious lives inward, ignoring the plight of others. I also think that the users of the term resent the fact that some rich people are not all bastards, as they are.

Edwina Currie aligned herself with the ranks of the *Daily Mail* harridans this week when she remarked that she was "thinner and prettier" than Emma Nicholson. This sort of behaviour only goes to confirm that some women in politics are quite happy to take on the playground mentality of the blokes. This election campaign is fast turning into *Grange Hill*, and there's not a damn thing any of us can do about it. If thin and pretty has anything whatsoever to do with one's political ideology, let's get the supermodels into politics and see what they make of the convergence criteria for Europe.

I see that a teenage magazine was censured this

week for including an article along the lines of "I slept with loads of blokes" - I think the figure was 40 in three months. The critics of the magazine were worried that the way in which the article was written and presented would make it look as though this sort of behaviour was a good thing to do.

Oh, don't make me laugh. If teenage girls know one thing, it is that a girl who sleeps with lots of boys is "a slag". (This is made perfectly clear to us at a very young age.) So the thought that any teenage girl will read this article with anything other a wry smile, is silly.

If grown-ups want to know what it is that influences the young ones, they need look no further than the trusty peer group. I saw a piece on telly this week about schoolkids who carry rucksacks full of books over one shoulder because it is "cool", despite the fact that it is ruining their backs. One girl was quoted as saying, "If everyone else started using both straps, I would too." So glad I'm not a teenager any more. See you all in 10 years' time, you poor little hunchbacked sheep.

تحتفظ من الأصل

business & city

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BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

High Court judge attacks City 'dishonesty'

Regan accused of 'iniquitous conduct' as net widens to 17 more companies

Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

The scandal surrounding Andrew Regan's failed £1.2bn takeover bid for the Co-op widened yesterday to include 17 leading City financial institutions and blue-chip companies. They were supplied with confidential information stolen from the Co-op after what a High Court judge described as "iniquitous conduct" on the part of Mr Regan and his advisers.

Details of the scale on which confidential information was circulated in the City emerged as the CWS won an extension to the High Court injunction banning the use of the illicitly obtained information. This had been provided to Mr Regan by Allan Green, the CWS controller of retailing who was suspended earlier this month.

Ruling in favour of the CWS, Mr Justice Lightman said: "I regard this as a quite exceptional case [and a] gross, wilful and disgraceful breach of confidence." He added: "It was inevitable that this bid would be stopped as soon as it was apparent that it was based on iniquitous conduct on the part of those making it."

He described the methods of obtaining the information as "clearly dishonest".

The CWS was also awarded the most punitive form of costs against the Regan camp. These are expected to run to millions of pounds and there will be a further claim for damages.

The CWS's QC, Christopher Clarke, read out in court a list of the 17 City firms which had received confidential information, mostly distributed by Hambros Bank, Mr Regan's financial adviser.

The list included Nomura International, which withdrew its backing for Mr Regan on Thursday, Price Waterhouse, Goldman Sachs, UBS and JP Morgan. Also cited was Sainsbury, the supermarket group which recently called off talks with Mr Regan to buy some of the Co-op supermarkets.

The information provided was so detailed that it fell into 32 categories including trading forecasts, the board's budget for 1997 and the entire CWS membership on diskette apart from those in Northern Ireland.

In his sworn affidavit, Mr Green also admitted discussing with Mr Regan the possibility

re-focusing the CWS as an operator of smaller convenience store outlets and about possible buyers of the larger stores including Tesco and Alders.

Appealing to the judge Mr Clarke said: "It is just that they pay now the cost... for behaviour we consider outrageous."

At a press conference staged later at the headquarters of SBC Warburg, the CWS's advisers, Graham Melmoth, the society's chief executive spoke of a "cascade" of stolen information saying it was an issue that "strikes to the heart of the City".

He said: "The City prides itself on its system of self-regulation and demands high standards of probity and integrity. Those standards must have been called into question by the activities of certain parties."

Brian Keelan, the CWS's key adviser at SBC Warburg said: "The last week has not been a good one for the City. It is an ugly situation."

He added that on Monday Warburg's had delivered to Hambros a file of information thought to contain details of the controversial £2.4m payment to an offshore company by Regan two years ago.

Though Mr Keelan declined to reveal the contents of the file he said he had expected Hambros to withdraw its backing for Mr Regan's bid at that point. But the bank decided to press ahead.

The CWS has added Hambros and Travers Smith Braithwaite, Mr Regan's legal advisers, to the injunction banning the use of the confidential information. It is also pursuing private civil proceedings against both. However, Travers Smith issued a short statement yesterday saying: "We will resist most strongly any claim which may be made against us." The firm believes that the theft of information is not included under the act.

The CWS is now pursuing the 17 institutions which received confidential Co-op information for assurances that it will not be used. It said replies had been received from some while others were taking advice from their lawyers. It said further action was possible. "We're not going to just sit back if another bid were to emerge that is based on that information."

Mr Melmoth said he did not feel triumphant as a result of the victory. He said the Regan "bid" would have a "cathartic" effect on the movement and encourage it to improve its performance and move its disparate societies closer together.

Mr Regan could not be contacted yesterday. It has emerged that the CWS has written to the Stock Exchange asking it to investigate whether any shareholders in Galileo traded shares in Lancia Trust with the benefit of inside information. In the letter it points out that confidential Co-op documents were distributed to Galileo's shareholders, including Jupiter Tyndall. A number of these were also shareholders in Lancia, whose shares were rising strongly on speculation of a big deal. Lancia's shares have been suspended since February. An announcement from the Exchange is expected in a few days.

Additional reporting by Chris Hughes



Battle lines: Lennox Fyfe, chairman of CWS (left), and chief executive Graham Melmoth yesterday at SBC Warburg, where the campaign against Andrew Regan was masterminded. Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

CWS turns up heat on Hambros

John Willcock
and Nigel Cope

The pressure on Hambros Bank grew yesterday as CWS commenced civil proceedings against the venerable blue chip merchant bank which has been advising Andrew Regan on his controversial takeover bid.

Mr Justice Lightman gave the go-ahead in the High Court yesterday for CWS to commence an action for damages against Hambros. The case centres on confidential documents provided to Mr Regan's bidding vehicle, Galileo, and his advisers, Hambros, by two senior CWS executives.

Graham Melmoth, chief executive of CWS, expressed his outrage yesterday at the way the documents containing highly confidential information, including minutes of CWS board meetings, were distributed by Hambros to 17 other institutions. Mr Melmoth said that "the documents have gone cascading around the City". He added: "We've uncovered much evi-

dence of illegal activity at the heart of the City."

The list of 17 included several banks, which Hambros approached to provide financing for the deal to buy CWS. Most declined to support the bid, but Nomura was about to complete a £1.2bn deal before it withdrew this week. Banking sources said Nomura had failed

CWS were Peter Large and Andrew Salmon.

A spokesman for Hambros said last night that it could not make any comment on the affair now that legal proceedings had started.

In a series of devastating letters this from Graham Melmoth to Lord Hambro, chairman of Hambros, the CWS boss con-

tinued that "it is inconceivable that anyone could have concluded that the documents had been obtained by legitimate means from a legitimate source."

Hambros continued its support right to the bitter end. It was only the decision of Nomura International to withdraw its £1.2bn of debt finance which finally forced Mr Regan to concede defeat.

UBS was approached by Hambros on 16 April to take part in the financing of the Regan bid. It is understood it received documents the following day. However, the negative publicity surrounding the deal deterred the bank from supporting the bid.

Goldman Sachs, the US investment bank, was another institution on the list of names that had seen the documents. The normally low profile bank was moved to issue a statement yesterday: "Goldman Sachs was represented at a presentation given by Hambros and Galileo in late March."

"We decided immediately and made clear to the other parties within days that we were not interested in proposals put forward in respect of CWS. Documents received were handed back to Hambros immediately when they were requested," the statement said.

Documents have gone cascading around... We've uncovered evidence of illegal activity at the heart of the City — Melmoth

to receive assurances from Galileo about the provenance of the information on CWS. CWS is taking legal action against the bank as a whole, not the individual employees who worked on behalf of Mr Regan. The main figures at Hambros that worked on the bid for

cluded that "it is inconceivable that anyone could have concluded that the documents had been obtained by legitimate means from a legitimate source."

How Co-op secrets were spread around the City

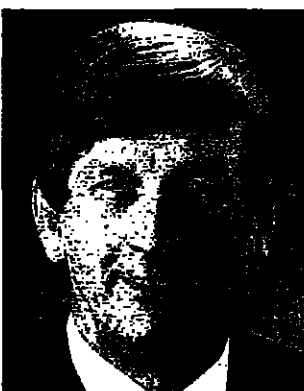
The companies and institutions who received confidential CWS documents, principally from Hambros Bank

Goldman Sachs International
Hambros Bank
Hillier Parker
Jupiter International Group
Lloyds Bank Registrars
Nomura International
Price Waterhouse
J Sainsbury
Société Générale
Union Bank of Switzerland
Healey & Baker
Leucadia National Corporation
J P Morgan
Lloyds Bank
Bankers Trust
HSBC Investment Bank
Avonwick



Justice Lightman: Scorned 'wilful breach of confidence'

Key figures in the abortive £1.2bn takeover bid for the Co-op



In the eye of the storm (from left): Andrew Regan; David Lyons, Mr Regan's business partner; Allan Green and David Chambers, both suspended as executives by the Co-op; David Evans, shareholder and former director of Galileo; Andrew Regan's bid vehicle; Lord Hambro, chairman of Hambros Bank; and Peter Large, part of Mr Regan's advisory team at Hambros

Morgan pays £200m in compensation

Nic Cicuttii
Personal Finance Editor

Morgan Grenfell Asset Management yesterday moved to close a chapter in the scandal surrounding the three troubled funds run by Peter Young, its maverick former manager, by promising that more than 80,000 individual investors in the trusts will receive about £110m in compensation.

Payments averaging about £1,300 per person will be sent on Tuesday to investors in the three funds, in which dealings were briefly suspended in September after trading irregularities were uncovered.

A further 90,000 investors,

whose savings were held in 250 nominee accounts run on their behalf by a number of life companies, including Skandia and Aegon, are expected to receive compensation worth a further £110m within the next few months.

The payments, to be made either by cheque or by topping up individuals' unit trust accounts, brings to £400m the total cost of Peter Young's activities being shouldered by Deutsche Bank, Morgan Grenfell's German parent.

Frances Davies, head of pooled funds at Morgan Grenfell, said: "The compensation will be paid on the basis of a formula agreed with Imro [the

fund management regulator]. We believe what has been agreed is full and fair."

She added that some 70 per cent of unitholders in the three funds, European Growth, Europa and European Capital Growth, had already requested top-ups rather than cash payments.

The mechanism for paying compensation involves setting August 1st 1995 as the starting date for assessing redress. This is the moment identified by Morgan Grenfell when Peter Young began his irregular trading.

Micropal, the specialist financial statistics provider, was asked to calculate average

fund performance to September 1996 for trusts within the same sectors and operating on the same principles as the three affected Morgan Grenfell ones.

In the case of the European Growth Trust, the flagship fund run by Peter Young, its growth was just 2.05 per cent compared to the average growth of the benchmark funds of 15.4 per cent over this period.

Calculating the compensation to be paid involves comparing the price at which investors bought the units and when they were sold, or September 6 1996, the date to that date.

Losses between the two

prices will be repaid in full. Ms Davies said yesterday. Investors would also receive an "underpin" to their funds returning their money in full, including the bid-offer spread on the investment. Payments would be topped up by an additional 6 per cent compound interest payable from September last year.

The payments next week bring to a close another chapter in the saga which severely damaged the credibility of Morgan Grenfell. Earlier this month it was fined £2m, plus £1.5m costs for a vast catalogue of regulatory offences that allowed Mr Young to engage in his rogue trading practices.

Ulster watchdog rejects MMC electricity curbs

Michael Harrison

The electricity watchdog for Northern Ireland yesterday rejected new price controls recommended by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in a move which could have serious repercussions for utility regulation throughout the UK.

Douglas McIlinden, the director-general of electricity supply, said he was not minded to accept some of the price controls for Northern Ireland Electricity called for by the MMC. The regulator and the MMC are at loggerheads over NIE's

depreciation policy and acceptable levels of capital and operating expenditure.

The dispute is unprecedented and could have ramifications for the way in which Clare Spottiswoode of Ofgas reacts when the Government publishes the MMC's long-awaited report into price controls for British Gas's transportation arm, now known as BG.

NIE had proposed a cut of 22 per cent in certain of its charges while the regulator wanted a reduction of 33 per cent. The MMC has proposed a reduction of 28 per cent which will mean

a cut in electricity bills in real terms of 14 per cent.

Patrick Haren, chief executive of NIE, warned that Mr McIlinden's refusal to accept the MMC's ruling threatened to bring the whole regulatory framework into disrepute, adding: "It is not now open to the director-general to reject the MMC's conclusions and we shall resist any attempt on his part to do so."

Although regulators are technically at liberty to disregard the MMC findings, since it is effectively acting as a court of appeal, the convention is for the MMC's recommendations to be accepted.

STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low
FTSE 100	4369.70	+18.80	+0.4	4444.30	4056.60
FTSE 250	4500.50	+16.90	+0.4	4729.40	4469.40
FTSE 350	2143.00	+9.00	+0.4	2194.30	2017.90
FTSE SmallCap	2295.67	+2.14	+0.1	2374.20	2178.29
FTSE All-Share	2112.15	+8.32	+0.4	2163.94	1989.79
Nifty 50	6752.92	+39.33	+0.6	7085.16	6032.94
Nikkei	18612.86	+85.21	+0.5	19448.00	17303.65
Hong Kong	12645.76	+81.07	+0.6	13868.24	12065.17
Frankfurt	3377.27	+20.09	+0.6	3460.58	2848.77

INTEREST RATES					
Short sterling*	UK medium gilt*	US long bond	Money Market Rates	Bond Yields*	Real Yields*
1 Month	1 Year	3 Month	1 Month	1 Year	1 Year
5.19	7.0	7.67	5.19	7.0	7.79
5.56	6.31	6.94	5.56	6.31	6.59
5.53	0.75	2.27	5.53	0.75	2.41
3.13	3.28	5.82	3.13	3.28	6.97

CURRENCIES					
£/\$	£/DM	£/¥	Pound	Dollar	Yen
Yesterday	Yesterday	Yesterday	Yesterday	Yesterday	Yesterday
1.6389	0.6109	151.14	1.6389	0.6109	151.14
1.6380	0.6105	150.80	1.6380	0.6105	150.80
2.8009	1.7112	2.3116	2.8009	1.7112	2.3116
206.548	126.180	100.66	206.548	126.180	100.66
100.1	106.7	84.3	100.1	106.7	84.3

OTHER INDICATORS					
Yesterday	Day's change	Year Ago	Index	Latest	Year Ago
18.16	+0.14	18.84	RPI	155.4	150.9
342.45	+1.5	394.35	GDP	109.7	107.0
210.99	+1.34	260.92	Base Rates	8.00pc	6.75

Peugeot increases profits to £30.5m

Peugeot Motor, the Coventry-based car maker, increased its profits sixfold to £30.5m last year as production reached record levels and its share of the UK car market rose, writes Michael Harrison.

The profits compare with the £74m that the entire Peugeot group earned in 1996 and help explain why the French parent company delivered a vote of confidence in its UK operation by approving a £100m investment in a new model this month. The car, a replacement for the 205, will go into production at Coventry late next year alongside the 306.

The strength of sterling against the French franc helped Peugeot to sell more cars last year with UK sales rising by 10,000 to 153,242. But Peugeot said the main factor behind the £30.5m profit - its highest since 1991 - was the improved competitiveness of the Coventry plant. Richard Parham, Peugeot's managing director, said he expected to increase sales further this year against a background of modest growth in the UK car market. Production is expected to reach 90,000 against 85,751 last year - of which just under one-third were exported.

JPY 100 to £5.20



JEREMY WARNER

New Labour's principal problem over Europe

For business, there really is only one issue in this election - Europe. Pensions, education and the future of the national health service - all vitally important national questions but ones which nonetheless shrink to insignificance alongside the momentous decisions which approach on Europe.

Unfortunately, it is also the issue our leading politicians least like to talk about. So I went along to a press awards ceremony earlier this week at which Tony Blair was speaking hoping to put to him this question. Did he really believe all that Eurosceptic, jingoistic claptrap he had written in the Sun that morning, where he had talked of "slaying the dragon" of a European superstate? Or was his position more accurately reflected in what he said privately to the pro-Europe business lobby - that he is broadly in favour of monetary union and wants Britain to be a part of it?

I never got any chance, for after a few publicity shots with an eight pint glass of Guinness, which was sponsoring the event, he was monopolised for the rest of lunch by Sir David English, former editor of the *Daily Mail* and now chief executive of Associated Newspapers. The two seemed to be getting on like a house on fire. But if Mr Blair was hoping to persuade Sir David that the *Mail* too should back New Labour, he had another think coming.

By the end of the week the *Mail* had rounded up a group of business leaders to fire

off the customary "reds under the bed" pre-polling day letter. This set-piece of Conservative Party election strategy normally adorns the letters page of the *Times*. Whether it is Rupert Murdoch's support for Mr Blair or something else, this time round the letter has been placed with the *Mail*.

They were the usual suspects: Lord Hanson (Hanson plc), John Neill (Unipart), Sir Stanley Kalms (Dixons), Sir Graham Kirkham (DFS Furniture), Christopher Miller (Wassall), etc. etc. But their message was a slightly different one. Both parties claim to advocate an enterprise economy, they rightly point out. So which party should people trust best to pursue enterprise policies? Clearly not Labour, they say, because though it claims to be a convert to the cause of free market economics, it supports the EU Social Chapter and the minimum wage. You just cannot trust Labour, was their message.

This was also Mr Blair's theme at the press lunch - not Europe itself, you understand (far too sensitive a subject, that one), but New Labour's Achilles' heel, the idea that it is unprincipled and would do and say almost anything to achieve power. As you might expect, Mr Blair was articulate and compelling in challenging the charge.

All the same, the evidence rather points the other way. I come at the perception not from the anti-European stance of the *Mail*'s business leaders, but from a pro-European stance.

Mr Blair's position on Europe, as aired in this election campaign at least, is just one of the manifestations of this tendency.

Publicly Mr Blair says what he thinks the electorate wants to hear; privately he says something different. I was chatting to one leading City supporter of the single currency recently (yes, there are a few) who was so incensed by Mr Blair's public position on Europe that he accused the Labour leader of "betrayal". Intemperate language like this is rare among such people. But he was right. It is not just old Labour that feels betrayed by the New. Judged by Mr Blair's public comments, there may now be as little to choose between the two main parties on Europe, other than the social policies complained of by the *Mail*'s businessmen, as everything else.

We must continue to presume that this is not the case, that Mr Blair is only saying what he thinks necessary to win. But if he is, then he can hardly complain about being thought unprincipled. It is vitally important for the future prosperity of this country and the enterprises that make it up, that Britain continues to play a full role in Europe including, if necessary, committing at the earliest possible date to the single European currency.

The business community is a many-headed beast which rarely speaks with one voice. But talk to Britain's leading multinationals, its world class companies, and they will generally agree with this view. Andrew

Buxton, chairman of Barclays, is surely right to imply as he did this week that it would be lunacy to enter the single currency while the pound is so high. What he seems not to appreciate, however, is that if the markets thought the pound would definitely be in, then starting would weaken and the problem would evaporate.

The future is not in "slaying" Europe, but in taming the dragon and making it dance to our own tune.

Nobody who reads these columns could have been left in much doubt about our position on Andrew Regan's bid for the Co-operative Wholesale Society. Not to put too fine a point on it, we have believed and said right from the start that the whole thing stinks. Only our lawyers have prevented us from using the word "dishonest" to describe it before. Thanks to Mr Justice Lightman we are now freed from any such constraint.

None of this has stopped Mr Regan and those associated with him from trying to persuade us otherwise. Of all the calls I've received in this hopeless endeavour, the most astonishing came yesterday from the public relations company representing Travers Smith Braithwaite. This was the City law firm which advised Hambros on a bid which involved documents plundered from the CWS and subsequently "cascaded"

through the City to just about everyone who cared to take a peep.

Now look here, I was told. You must understand that all this stuff put out by Hambros and Keenan is just a distraction, a sideshow from the major issue. Which is what, I asked? The appalling underperformance of the CWS, the desperate need to do something about it.

Excuse me, but who, apart from those who hoped to profit from it, could give a damn about the underperformance of the Co-op? The CWS is a mutually owned institution not answerable to shareholders or their disciplines. The attempt to make it so was not undertaken out of any great sense of public interest or purpose, but merely for the sake of a fast buck at someone else's expense.

The main issue here is nothing to do with the underperformance of the Co-op, which is a complete irrelevance. It is to do with the fact that in the search for new sources of income and profit, scant regard was paid to normally accepted commercial rules and practices. Just who was to blame and to what extent will have to await the judgement of regulators. But no amount of complaining about the Co-op's performance can distract from the fact that Hambros and a large number of other top drawer City firms failed to ask the right questions either of themselves or their clients.

Boom fuels demands for tax or rate rises

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

Britain is booming as the Conservatives claim, the latest figures for national output suggested yesterday. But the rapid growth recorded by the last official statistics due before the general election led to calls for an immediate rise in taxes or interest rates.

City economists were highly sceptical about John Major's claim yesterday that his Government had broken the cycle of boom followed by bust. "The failure to raise either taxes or interest rates is the political business cycle gone mad," said David Bloom at James Capel.

A growing number of analysts favour tax increases in a post-election Budget because an increase in base rates might drive the strong pound even higher.

The 17 per cent exchange rate rise since last autumn has tilted the balance of growth towards consumer spending and away from exports. The boom is also centred on the South-east and industries like financial services.

"For the first time in 20 years some good old-fashioned Labour policies are exactly what the economy needs. A few extra pounds on the mortgage don't stop highly paid people buying dinner at Quaglinos," said Simon Briscoe, an economist at investment bank Nikko.

"If there were ever a good economic case for redistributing income through tax, it is now."

While business organisations have also started to demand tax increases as opposed to higher interest rates, some economists still think higher borrowing costs are needed to cool the boom.

"You can't tinker with taxes to fine tune the business cycle, and it is the easiest thing in the world to reverse an interest rate increase if exports slow too sharply," said Kevin Gardiner at Morgan Stanley.

All the experts agree that whoever is chancellor after the election will need to tighten the reins of policy swiftly.

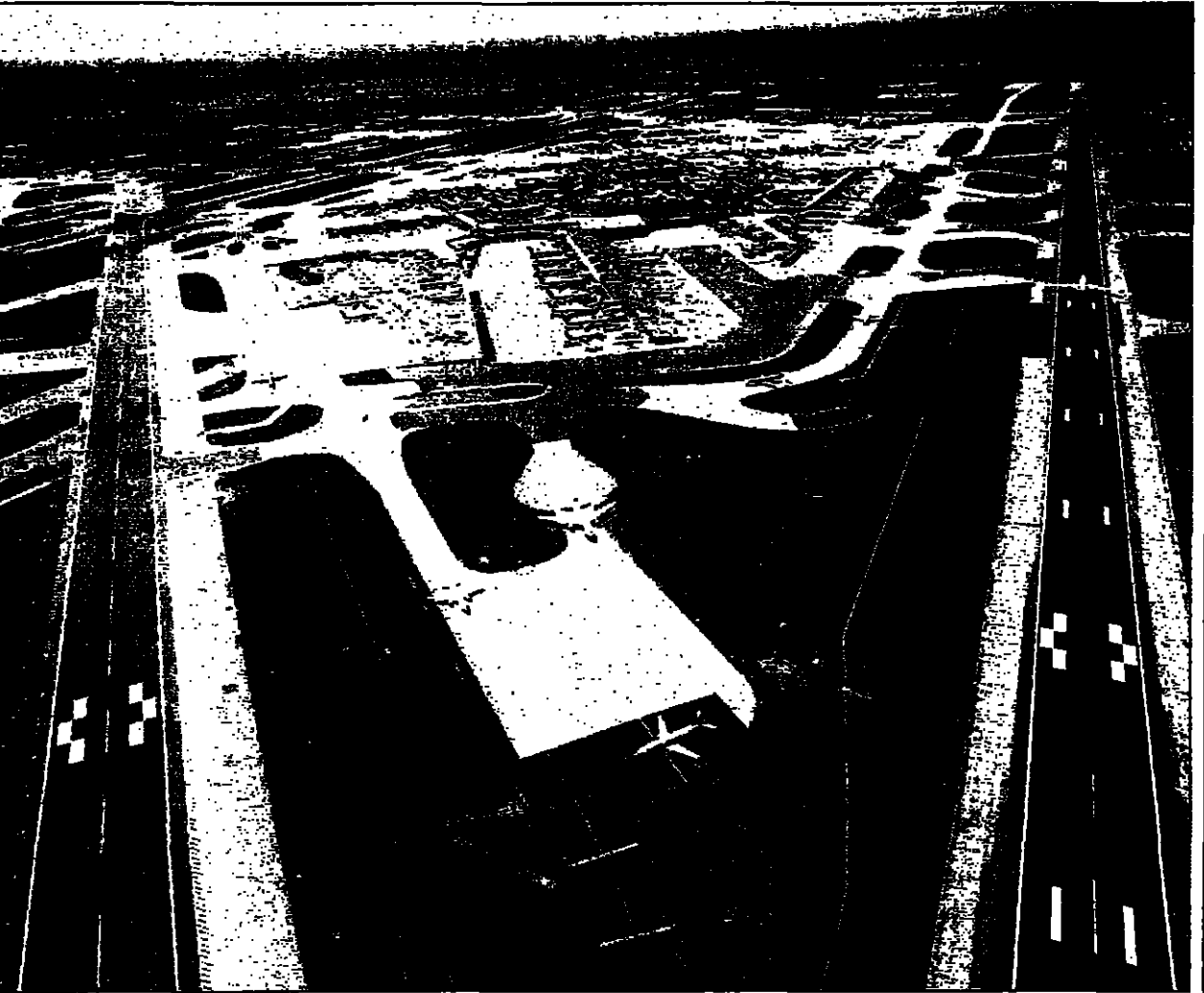
Philip Shaw, chief economist at Union, predicted that any improvement in the Tories' standing in the polls this week would unnerve the markets. "That would make it more likely that we would get a hung parliament, with a government that could not take unpopular decisions."

Yesterday's figures for gross domestic product, the broadest measure of economic activity, showed a 1 per cent increase in the first quarter of this year. It reached a level 3 per cent higher than a year earlier. This was the fastest growth for two years.

Service sector output increased by 1.2 per cent during the quarter, and 3.9 per cent year on year. Business services, including accountancy and consultancy, continued to show the highest growth according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Finance, communications and catering also grew strongly.

But the ONS also indicated that industrial production grew at broadly the same rate as the previous quarter, which implies that its biggest component, manufacturing output, picked up despite the strong pound.

With earnings growing faster, tax cuts this month and building society share handouts starting, GDP growth is likely to accelerate. Sterling's impact on exports is not expected to become severe until next year.



Not grounded: Despite allowing for a £53m hit on profits this year BAA is confident Heathrow's Terminal 5 will be approved

BAA accounts for T5 delays

Michael Harrison

The airports operator BAA yesterday denied that it was concerned about Terminal 5 being blocked after it announced changes in accounting policy in connection with the £1.5bn project.

The company said it had decided to stop capitalising interest on the project in light of delays in gaining approval for T5. The move will result in a £40m exceptional charge for the year just ended. Together with the £13m interest charges incurred on the project this year, the total hit on BAA profits will be £53m.

However, BAA's finance director, Russell Walls, rejected

suggestions that the change in policy reflected worries that the marathon planning inquiry into T5 might come down against BAA.

"It's not a lack of confidence on our part. It's just that with the delay the capitalised interest is becoming 30 per cent of the total amount spent and it is compounding all the time."

The inquiry began in 1995 and BAA had originally expected a government decision to have been reached by now. However, the inquiry is not now expected to end until mid-1998 because of the level of opposition voiced by environmentalists and local residents. This means that a final decision is unlikely to be

reached before 2000. The inspector is expected to take a year to write his report and then it will be studied for at least six months by the Departments of Transport and the Environment before a decision is made.

Up to the end of last year BAA had spent £178m on preparatory work on T5 of which £49m was capitalised interest. Although interest will no longer be capitalised, the on-going development costs, running at £30m a year, will continue to be capitalised. BAA said it would resume capitalisation of interest if and when planning permission was granted.

BAA announced earlier this

week that British Airways and its alliance partners would, subject to planning approval, become the new occupants of T5. BAA says that without the new terminal it will not be able to cope with the increase in demand for air travel in the South-east. It claims that traffic levels at the three London airports will double between now and 2013. Although Gatwick and Stansted will continue to grow, BAA says it will only be able to meet demand if it gets the go-ahead for T5, which will have a capacity of 30 million passengers.

Last year the three London airports handled 85.6 million passengers, of whom 56 million went through Heathrow.

IN BRIEF

Japan shuts Nissan Mutual Life

Nissan Mutual Life Insurance, Japan's 16th-largest life insurer, has been shut down by the regulatory authorities. The company was ordered to stop selling new policies immediately, making it the first insurer closed by the government in more than a half century. Its 1.2 million policies will be managed by a custodial institution, with Nissan Mutual paying benefits on them to the extent it can. The shutdown is another example of the Ministry of Finance moving decisively to clean up problems throughout the country's financial system, including regional banks, credit co-operatives, insurers, large banks, and so-called non-bank finance companies. A weak link in one of Japan's most troubled industries, the closure of Nissan Mutual is similar to that of Hanwa Bank. The troubled regional bank was ordered closed last November by the Ministry in the first shutdown of a bank in more than 50 years. Nissan Mutual, with more than 4,000 employees in 82 offices, closed its doors with liabilities outstripping assets by about 10 per cent.

David Abell's reputation under attack

Thomas Jourdan, the Corby trouser press consumer products group, launched a broadside against the reputation of David Abell, the controversial former chairman of the Suter multi-conglomerate, as it attempted to enlist the support of shareholders to defeat his motion to unseat most of the existing board. Since December Mr Abell has built a stake of 28 per cent in the company and it has emerged that the Takeover Panel now deems him to be acting in concert with holders of a further 11 per cent. He has requisitioned an extraordinary general meeting for next month to have the current non-executive directors and the chairman, Keith Whitten, replaced by himself and his business colleague, Jon Pither.

But in a letter to shareholders, the company draws attention to the highly critical 1993 Department of Trade and Industry inquiry into some of Mr Abell's previous share buying activities. The inspectors' report excoriated him of any wrongdoing but criticised his "misleading and inconsistent statements and evidence". Jourdan claims: "Mr Abell's past record is controversial and unimpressive. He should not be allowed to take over your company." Mr Abell refused to make any comment on the allegations levelled at him yesterday. He denied any immediate intention to launch a takeover, but implied that he had the financial backing if he wanted to do so.

Regal booking at Country Club

Regal Hotels announced its third big acquisition in two years with a £64.5m deal to acquire 13 hotels under the Country Club brand name from Whitbread. The latest move brings to £211m the amount Regal has spent on large acquisitions since April 1995. It is being part-financed through a £36.6m placing and one-for-five open offer at 54p, taking the amount raised from shareholders to £122m over the past two years. Whitbread gave Regal exclusive negotiating rights on the latest deal, which executive chairman Charles Vere-Nicol said was being done on a similar earnings multiple of under 9 to last year's acquisition of 60 hotels from Forte. The new outlets, independently valued at £64.7m, will take Regal's total chain of provincial three-star hotels to 95.

Harrison departs from Alpha Airports

Paul Harrison is leaving Alpha Airports, the in-flight caterer and airport retailer he has been chief executive of since the group was spun out of Forte and subsequently floated on the stock market in 1994, to join the board of Standard Chartered Bank. At the age of 50, after six years with Alpha, he will resume his long-term involvement with information technology and operating systems, leaving Rodney Galpin, the chairman and a former executive director of the Bank of England and chairman of Standard Chartered Bank, to take a more hands-on role until a successor is appointed. The Standard Chartered connection was pure coincidence, a spokesman said. Paul Ashworth, the new managing director of the catering division, joins the board. Alpha, in which Mohamed al-Fayed is now a 25 per cent shareholder, also published results showing a drop in annual pre-tax profits from £20.6m to £7.8m.

Capital goes on £147m shopping spree

Capital & Regional Properties is buying a portfolio of five in-town shopping centres from clients of Grosvenor Asset Management for a total of £147m. The company said the deal would increase the value of its gross property assets by almost 60 per cent from £248m to £395m. The shopping centres being acquired are Liberty II Shopping Centre, Romford; Selborne Walk, Walthamstow; London Alhambra Centre, Barnsey; Howgate Centre, Falkirk; and Sauchiehall Centre, Glasgow. Following the acquisition, retail properties will account for around 84 per cent of the company's enlarged portfolio. Capital & Regional plans to finance the acquisition by a placing and open offer of 28.16 million shares at 21.5p each, raising around £60.5m, and by £94m of bank facilities.

Euromoney raises stake in banking letter

Euromoney Publications has bought back a 15 per cent stake in the *Petroleum Economist* from its publisher, Nigel Bance, for £1.09m in cash. Euromoney now holds 95 per cent of the business and has the right to acquire the remaining 5 per cent from Mr Bance on an agreed profit-related formula at a maximum price of £2m. Euromoney originally acquired the *Petroleum Economist* newsletter and installed Mr Bance to run it. He has successfully diversified it into a leading supplier of specialist maps, books and training courses related to the energy industry. It made £1.15m before tax in the year to last September.

Martin Currie's new trust raises £45m

Investment managers Martin Currie have raised £45m for a new split-capital investment trust, the Martin Currie Income & Growth, with 45 per cent in income shares, 15 per cent invested for capital growth and 40 per cent in zero dividend preference shares. Income shares will receive all the income with an initial yield of 9.25 per cent at the placing price of 100p. Zero dividend shares will generate capital growth of 8.25 per cent a year compound over the 10-year planned life of the fund. Up to 40 per cent will be invested overseas.

Tobacco giants hit as FDA wins court fight

David Osborne
New York

Tobacco stocks were being battered once again last night, after a US federal judge upheld the right of the government to regulate the sale of cigarettes. While the ruling was mixed in its content, it was mostly a disappointment for the tobacco companies. The companies had been suing the Clinton administration over its approval of new rules drawn up by the Food and Drug Administration to constrain the marketing of cigarettes.

But not everything in the judgement went the government's way. The court said that while the FDA was entitled to regulate the selling of cigarettes, it did not have the power to control industry advertising.

The ruling had been extremely keenly awaited and is likely to play directly into closed-door negotiations now underway between the industry and its various adversaries on a possible \$300bn (£185bn) long-term settlement. Within minutes of the 60-page ruling's appearance, the industry and the Clinton administration vowed to

appeal against those parts that each side disliked.

In a pugnacious statement, President Clinton said: "This is a fight for the health and the lives of our children." While conceding that a government appeal was being launched, the President added: "With this ruling, we can regulate tobacco products and protect our children from a lifetime of addiction and the prospect of having their lives cut short by this addiction."

Issued in 1995, the FDA rules seek to impose various constraints on the industry, for example by banning vending-machine sales, outlawing billboard advertising near schools and requiring shop owners to obtain proof of age (above 18 years) before selling cigarettes to young people.

Behind these rules, however, is the key principle that the FDA is trying to establish: that cigarettes are a system for drug delivery and therefore must be subject to regulation. That is the principle the industry so dislikes and which the judge yesterday failed fully to knock down.

"It is a partial victory for the

industry and a partial defeat," commented Roy Burry, a tobacco sector analyst with Oppenheimer in New York. "But I think it's more negative than positive for them."

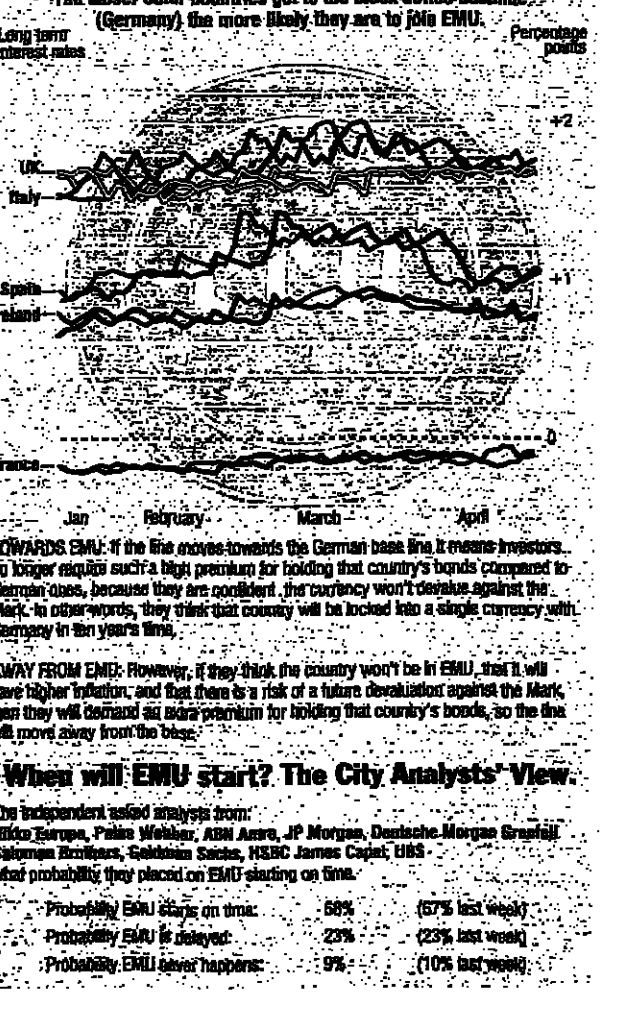
This seemed to be reflected in the market, where within minutes of the ruling's release, shares in Philip Morris dipped by \$2 to \$39.625, while RJR Nabisco lost \$1.50 to \$30.125.

The search for a truce between the US tobacco industry and its adversaries that could lead to the creation of a \$300bn smokers' compensation fund is meanwhile being snarled by arguments over legal immunity.

Several leading US health organisations as well as members of the US Congress have begun to voice alarm about what may emerge from secret talks begun three weeks ago between America's two biggest cigarette makers and representatives of the 23 US states suing the industry.

At the heart of the talks is a formula whereby the tobacco industry would agree to pay as much as \$300bn over 25 years into the smokers' fund and comply in future with new federal oversight of tobacco sales and harsh curbs on advertising.

Who will be in EMU? The financial markets' view



Election triggers delay fears

The uncertainty over whether EMU would go ahead on time in 1999 caused by Monday's snap-election announcement in France, was counter-balanced later in the week by the European Commission's favourable report on the economic prospects of the candidates for the single currency, writes Chris Hughes.

The Commission said 13 of the 15 candidates would qualify in 1999. It sent a clear signal that Italy would be excluded, saying its budget deficit would increase in 1998.

"The Commission's optimism stretches credulity. The point is it would rather dilute the criteria and have a broad EMU go ahead on time than delay it," said Eric Fishwick, international economist at Nikko Europe.

Polls suggesting party support in France was narrowing unsettled analysts. The opposition socialists, although they support EMU, want to ease the criteria for membership.

"If the new government opposes Germany on entry conditions, EMU will be delayed since EMU without France is inconceivable," said Alison Cottrell of Paine Webber.

choice. Gordon Richards's runner is 8lb out of the handicap, and Richard Durrant's mount is

The card's second chance should fall to Kemmure-Speed (2-50), but it is the two Group Three Flat contests which will do most to make it the featured event. The Thresher Challenge Trial has not been won by a subsequent Derby winner for 1.1 seasons, but has still featured some useful animals in recent years, most notably Gentoo, the winner in 1995, and Clivity O' Dancer, second last year and then fourth at Epsom. On paper at least, this year's field could be a very good one, with Benny the Dip, the 10-year-old American, one of the boys worth promoting.

RICHARD EDMONDSON
N.P.: Barton Bank
(Dip, 10-year-old, 3-30)
NR: Al-Royal
(Sandown 4.45)

who also finished third in the Racing Post Trophy, is the former horse, but his trainer is going through a quiet spell and he may be vulnerable to Silver Patriarch (next best 4.10), one of two runners from John Dunlop's yard.

The Gordon Richards Stakes will also see a firm favourite in Al-Royal, whose recent win at Newmarket was franked when

Made Italy

HYPERION'S

Sandown - 3.30				
Horse	C	H	L	T
Amo Amara	11.4	7.2	7.3	3.1

THE

SUPPLEMENTAL

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150	151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158	159	160	161	162	163	164	165	166	167	168	169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176	177	178	179	180	181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192	193	194	195	196	197	198	199	200	201	202	203	204	205	206	207	208	209	210	211	212	213	214	215	216	217	218	219	220	221	222	223	224	225	226	227	228	229	230	231	232	233	234	235	236	237	238	239	240	241	242	243	244	245	246	247	248	249	250	251	252	253	254	255	256	257	258	259	260	261	262	263	264	265	266	267	268	269	270	271	272	273	274	275	276	277	278	279	280	281	282	283	284	285	286	287	288	289	290	291	292	293	294	295	296	297	298	299	300	301	302	303	304	305	306	307	308	309	310	311	312	313	314	315	316	317	318	319	320	321	322	323	324	325	326	327	328	329	330	331	332	333	334	335	336	337	338	339	340	341	342	343	344	345	346	347	348	349	350	351	352	353	354	355	356	357	358	359	360	361	362	363	364	365	366	367	368	369	370	371	372	373	374	375	376	377	378	379	380	381	382	383	384	385	386	387	388	389	390	391	392	393	394	395	396	397	398	399	400	401	402	403	404	405	406	407	408	409	410	411	412	413	414	415	416	417	418	419	420	421	422	423	424	425	426	427	428	429	430	431	432	433	434	435	436	437	438	439	440	441	442	443	444	445	446	447	448	449	450	451	452	453	454	455	456	457	458	459	460	461	462	463	464	465	466	467	468	469	470	471	472	473	474	475	476	477	478	479	480	481	482	483	484	485	486	487	488	489	490	491	492	493	494	495	496	497	498	499	500	501	502	503	504	505	506	507	508	509	510	511	512	513	514	515	516	517	518	519	520	521	522	523	52
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For Marlar read radical romantic

It is in the nature of cricket that, when the season ends the kit is locked away and thoughts of those involved return to something approaching normality. It usually lasts until about Christmas, then all hell breaks loose - somewhere.

This year the serene ambience of the South Downs has been rudely disturbed by a well publicised rumour at Hove. Since the sacking towards the end of last season of their England A fast bowler Ed Giddins, who was found to have taken cocaine, five more senior players have left the club for various reasons, including the deposed captain, Alan Wells.

But according to one member, Robin Marlar, ex-Harrow and Cambridge, former county captain, former *Sunday Times* cricket correspondent, former Conservative parliamentary candidate for Bolsover and now, to his delight, chairman of Sussex, it had all been going wrong long before the Giddins affair.

"The whole thing was rotten, but it was so easy for someone of my background to repair," said the president of Marlar International, his head-hunting company, and the Marlar Group of Consultancies.

For Marlar the final straw had come in November when Danny Lew, a promising young all-rounder of whom he had particularly high hopes, left Sussex to join Essex. When Tony Pigott, a former Sussex player, subsequently asked Marlar to back his attempt to overthrow the entire Sussex committee, Marlar, now 66, needed no second bidding. This was despite a serious hip operation just a couple of years

Adam Szreter meets the cricket journalist now in charge of Sussex

'Sussex people are not like Yorkshiremen. To get beaten isn't the end of the world'

has been restored. Whether it will be quiet, however, is another matter.

Marlar and Pigott seem an odd couple at first glance, both former Sussex players but from very different eras. Earlier this week, in the drawing room of his extensive manor house near Guildford which he shares with his beloved wife and two doting dogs, Marlar explained: "His father and I played cricket at school together, but in all the time I've been in newspapers I've never been close to any of the players."

"At one stage Tony wanted to leave Sussex early in his

career - he'd been offered a job by Warwickshire. We had a long chat to find out what he really wanted, as you do, and he obviously wanted to stay where he was."

Marlar management is something Marlar will undoubtedly involve himself with at Hove but it is hard to believe any aspect of the club's running will be left un-Marlarised. "One of the things I've been raising against for years is the complete failure of cricketing establishments to organise themselves properly, including Lord's," he said. "What we've done is put in the kind of management structure that any consultant would do in a minute. It's blindingly obvious and so simple."

"The thing's got to be run as an executive body, with someone to look after the cricket, the same as a production manager in a factory, marketing, which is absolutely crucial; and the administration - counting up the books. Classic organisation."

"My job is non-executive and I'll have to keep reminding myself and the members of the committee who are also non-executive, how they can and cannot behave. They're not going to like this, some of them."

"For instance, the first little problem we've got is the library, which is in the best office on the County Ground. The cricket office is in a Portakabin behind a sight screen, without windows and facing the wrong way. Facing a block of flats. The cricket office? What's the bloody club for? For playing cricket. So Tony Pigott said we're going to move the cricket office and I said go ahead, go for it."

"The chief librarian, who is a lovely man and does a

wonderful job, couldn't handle it and resigned. We'll make him a vice-president because he deserves it, a very important servant of the club."

Marlar has high hopes of the newly formed English Cricket Board and was quick to defend its chairman, Lord MacLaurin, a long-time acquaintance, over his recent threat to resign if the counties did not fall in with future proposals. "The ECB pays five-eighths of our revenue and they're entitled to do whatever they like. All counties



A home from Hove: Robin Marlar's varied career now includes being chairman of Sussex. Photograph: Robert Hallam

should be audited from the centre. That would be a revolution in itself."

The structure of the game is, according to Marlar, of secondary importance. "You could play a whole concerto on the new ideas, it's just that every now and again one of them becomes politically correct. This latest one, two divisions, is absolute bunk."

One subject which Marlar momentarily lost for words is one on which he is perhaps better qualified to speak than any other club chairman - the press. He intends to continue writing and as to his companions in the Press box he says, after much thought: "I think all the members of the media love their cricket. But the understanding of it, as evidenced sometimes by questions in press conferences, is enough to upset the players and is deleterious to future respect."

Despite, or perhaps because of, his own vintage Marlar is keen to stress his ideas for bringing young people into the game.

"That's the real issue," he says. He intends to incorporate an under-30s management group into the Hove structure and is working on a plan to attract children of working parents into the ground during holidays.

Despite the encouraging start they have made against Northamptonshire, expectations on the playing side at Sussex will not be high this season. "Before, the attitude at the club was that you've got to win something. It's not that now, and nor should it ever be

because Sussex people are not like Yorkshiremen or Lancashiremen; to get beaten isn't the end of the world. To play well is the objective. If you play well and lose, that's not a disgrace. I don't mind that."

And for the time being Marlar, who could perhaps be described as a radical romantic, "couldn't be more pleased" with life. "For a captain to be a cricket journalist for 42 years and then finish up as chairman of the club, even for a year, it's just a dream, absolute dream."

Hampshire grab lifeline

DEREK PRINGLE
reports from Chelmsford
Essex 246 and 442-8 dec
Hampshire 161 and 3-0

Rain may be something that is desperately needed around the country, but droughts are still the preference of those whose teams are in the ascendancy, as Essex are here. With only 15 overs possible, however, the rain was not just confined to those in the farming sector, as Hampshire, needing 528 to win, gleefully huddled aboard the temporary life raft thrown them as a leaden sky dropped its load.

With rain forecast, many thought it curious that Essex batted on at all, given that they were already 459 runs ahead when play started on time. But that they did, the extra 14 overs giving Ronnie Irani plenty of time to reach an unbeaten 123, the best of his career.

But well though Irani played, in the context of this game, bat-

Surrey left counting their blessings

HENRY BLOFIELD
reports from The Oval
Somerset 463
Surrey 209-8

The rain which allowed only 69 minutes play here was a mixed blessing. Surrey, who with two first-innings wickets left still need 105 to avoid the follow-on, will have been well pleased while Somerset are now going to struggle to win a match which was theirs for the taking and will have been less than enchanted.

A start was not made until six minutes past 12 and in the remaining time before lunch Ian Salisbury showed that he is a competent enough batsman, defending surely and picking up runs where he could.

He is a more than useful acquisition for Surrey if only he can build up the confidence to make the most of his ability. Surrey's batsmen should score

Tall order for Derbyshire

ROUND-UP

Derbyshire, last season's runners-up, have a fight on their hands to avoid defeat in their opening match at Canterbury after their bowlers let Kent off the hook yesterday morning.

Set 337 to win, they reached 59 for 2 before rain halted play for the day in mid-afternoon. Much will depend today on the third-wicket pair, Chris Adams and Dean Jones, unbeaten on 33 and 19 respectively.

To make matters worse for Derbyshire, there were groin injuries to Philip DeFreitas, who earlier finished with 7 for 64 - his best for Derbyshire - and Dominic Cork, who will miss the one-day games tomorrow and on Monday.

In addition Andy Hayhurst tore a cartilage in his right knee after falling awkwardly in the field and 47-year-old Australian coach Les Stilleman was called upon to take over from him.

Kent's last four wickets added 153, with Paul Strang making 69

at a run a ball and Martin McCague hitting an unbeaten 53. Keith Newell completed his maiden championship century before persistent rain frustrated Sussex's hopes of establishing a commanding first-innings lead over Northamptonshire at Hove.

The 25-year-old from Crawley, who resumed on 91 with the hosts 344 for 6, had advanced to 107 when rain cut short the day after only 55 minutes' play. Sussex, 29 ahead overnight, stretched their lead to 96, reaching 411 for 7.

The defending champions Leicestershire's hopes of starting the season with a victory were also hit by the weather. Not a ball was bowled at Grace Road, where the hosts hold a 62-run lead over Gloucestershire, who are eight without loss in their second innings.

The day was made all the gloomier for Leicestershire when they learned that they had failed to sign the South African all-rounder Neil Johnson as their overseas player to replace Phil Simmons for this season. John-

Vinson out of the running for Monarchs

American football

The London Monarchs must win tonight in Amsterdam to keep alive their hopes of hosting the World Bowl, an honour bestowed on the team with the best mark midway through the season.

Their opponents, the Admirals, coming off a 19-10 defeat in Frankfurt and without a victory, are also under pressure. They have to win to salvage any hope of a championship run.

The Monarchs suffered defeat in their last game, too, a 28-6 beating by Rhein Fire, a loss that saw their running back, Tony Vinson, hobble off the field with a sprained ankle after gaining a paltry five yards. He is unlikely to play, his position filled by the powerful Ed Hobbs and the rapid Abrams Smith.

London will want to improve on the Rhein game, which saw their offence rush for a mere 39 yards and four first downs while the quarterback, Stan White, sacked three times, completed just eight passes for 74 yards.

Lionel Taylor, the Monarchs coach, described the defeat as a "good old fashioned whipping", but yesterday was taking a positive view. "I hope some good comes out of that game, because it might shake some of my guys up a bit," he said.

Taylor will be anxious for London to counter the threat posed by the Admirals' running back, Brent Moss. Mike McCoy, the quarterback, has completed nine of 18 passes for 86 yards and one touchdown but has thrown two interceptions.

McMillan retires from the ring

Boxing

Colin McMillan, the former World Boxing Organisation featherweight champion, yesterday announced his retirement from the sport.

McMillan lost his British title to Paul Ingle in January and after four months of deliberation has decided to pursue a career on the other side of the ropes.

"I didn't want to rush into a decision," McMillan, 31, said. "I wanted to think it through and weigh up everything and now I feel it's time for me to call it a day and move on."

"I couldn't get motivated for the last fight against Ingle. Once you've fought at world level it's hard to get yourself motivated for other fights against some of the young, hungry guys who want to get your scalp on their record as a former world champion."

McMillan added: "I always knew it would be a hard route back after holding the world title. I'm sad in a way that I never realised my full potential because the injury came along and was a problem for the next couple of years."

"When I beat Stecca I felt at the time that there was still more to come, but everything came to halt after the shoulder trouble just at the time I thought I was reaching the highest level. I made a costly miscalculation against Ingle and I'm more annoyed with myself than anything else."

"I don't think he was so fit and mentally prepared as he was and I tried to fight his fight. But I believe that if I had boxed him I'd have beaten him."

"I don't have the appetite to go through it all again. But I don't want to move too far away from boxing and I will possibly train fighters in the future."

He regained the British title 11 months ago by outpointing Gloucester's Jonjo Irwin in a thriller at Dagenham but the big chance never came his way again.

Samaranch visits 2002 Games site

Olympic Games

Juan Antonio Samaranch, the International Olympic Committee president, has made a visit to Salt Lake City, Utah, the venue for the 2002 Winter Olympics.

Samaranch met with local leaders and attended a Utah Jazz NBA play-off game on Thursday. He was scheduled to complete his two-day visit yesterday.

After a quick tour of West Valley City's new hockey arena Samaranch visited the Mormon Church president, Gordon B. Hinckley, and then attended the Jazz-Clippers basketball game which Utah won 106-86.

Samaranch's schedule also included a tour of the University of Utah campus and Fort Douglas where the Athlete Village is planned, a news conference and a helicopter tour of the mountain venues for the 2002 Games.

Miami's fast start to play-off

Basketball

The Miami Heat raced to a 25-point first-quarter lead before beating Orlando Magic 99-64. Orlando's points total equalled the National Basketball Association record for fewest points in a play-off game.

With a 35-10 advantage, the Heat held the second-largest lead after one quarter in league play-off history. Milwaukee led Philadelphia 40-14 in 1970.

The Magic have never won a play-off series after losing the first game. The second game takes place tomorrow.

Voshon Lenard outscored Orlando 11-10 in the first period and finished with 24 points, including six three-pointers. The Magic made just 26 of 85 shots. Miami's Alonzo Mourning had 12 points, 11 rebounds and six blocked shots. Tim Hardaway added 13 points and 11 assists.

Four players took turns guarding Orlando's Penny Hardaway, who was 6-for-16 and scored 13 points. His teammate Derek Strong had 15 points.

In the other play-off game in New York, the Knicks beat the Charlotte Hornets 109-99. John

TODAY'S NUMBER

94

The number of declared runners for today's meeting at Market Rasen. With only 88 stables on the course, clerk of the course Charles Moore has asked trainers with runners in later races to arrive as late as possible.

Bjornebye is relieved despite European exit

Rudge rallies his Vale troops

ed chance

who again deputised for the injured Mark Schwarzer.

"He didn't lose his head in a big way because that's not his style, but he told us the truth, that we'd been lethargic and late three points get away. We all know he was right to say it. We all know it just reinforced it in our minds. It wasn't as if we didn't have the chances, just that we didn't put them away again."

"We just keep on getting beat 1-0 in games we should be winning, and this is the time when we really have to start getting points on board. It's happened all season really. Whenever we've got an early goal, we've gone on to dominate games and win well."

Di Canio reveals financial rift with Celtic

passion for the club and supporters. I have over three years of my contract to run and I am happy to honour my commitment. I should not doubt my commitment.

"I hope this will end any rumours that I am anything less than happy at Celtic and in Scotland. The Celtic supporters and Scottish people could not be kinder to me and my family."

■ Alex Ferguson yesterday paid tribute to the achievement of his former club, Falkirk, in reaching the Tennent's Scottish Cup final under the guidance of one of his former team-mates, Alex Totten. "Alex was a team-mate of mine both at Falkirk and Dunfermline," Ferguson said. "It was an incredible result to beat Celtic. The final will be a great occasion for them and I think towns all over Scotland will be buzzing something like that can give them once in a while."

but which now occupies half of the Embankment. And what are we getting instead? The Reebok Stadium. Catchy name, huh? We are promised an all-seater venue fit for the 21st century and, from what I've seen, this out-of-town arena does indeed look mightily impressive: sprouting up in a spaceship kind of a way by some fields close to the motorway.

The attendant entertainment village—comprising a multiplex cinema, US-style restaurants, bowling alley, shopping complex, motel, gym and other leisure facilities—could not be further removed from the aged feel of the terraced houses that are crammed up close to one side of Burnden.

But, I ask you, couldn't a club with the proud tradition of Bolton Wanderers have come up with something more original than naming their new ground solely after the club's sponsors. What happens when Reebok end their sponsorship?

Even Middlesbrough, the embodiment of big bucks and commercialism, managed to retain some dignity when naming their new home the Celtic Riverside Stadium.

Surely, even the Brand Spanking New Fit For The Millennium Close To The Fields Just Off The M61 Stadium has more of a ring to it than the Reebok Stadium?

But, whatever its name, it will never be Burnden Park...

MAJOR WEEKEND FIXTURES & POOLS CHECK

TODAY									
*Official start									
NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE									
First Division									
1. Barnsley	Blackpool City	2. Bolton	Cardiff City	3. Charlton	4. Chelsea	5. Coventry	6. Crystal Palace	7. Derby	8. Everton
9. Fulham	10. Gillingham	11. Ipswich	12. Leeds	13. Luton	14. Manchester City	15. Middlesbrough	16. Newcastle	17. Norwich	18. Oxford
19. Peterborough	20. Reading	21. Southampton	22. Sheffield Wednesday	23. Stoke	24. Sunderland	25. Swansea	26. Tottenham	27. Walsley	28. West Ham
Second Division									
1. Bolton	2. Bradford City	3. Burnley	4. Carlisle	5. Colchester	6. Crewe	7. Exeter	8. Grimsby	9. Huddersfield	10. Lincoln
11. Mansfield	12. Notts County	13. Oldham	14. Rotherham	15. Shrewsbury	16. Southend	17. Stockport	18. Swindon	19. Torquay	20. Wrexham
Third Division									
1. Bury	2. Cambridge	3. Chesham	4. Darlington	5. Doncaster	6. Hartlepool	7. Histon	8. Kidderminster	9. Mansfield	10. Notts County
11. Peterborough	12. Rushden	13. Sharnford	14. Solihull	15. Stevenage	16. Tamworth	17. Torquay	18. Walsley	19. Weymouth	20. Woking
Fourth Division									
1. Bury	2. Cambridge	3. Chesham	4. Darlington	5. Doncaster	6. Hartlepool	7. Histon	8. Kidderminster	9. Mansfield	10. Notts County
Fifth Division									
1. Bury	2. Cambridge	3. Chesham	4. Darlington	5. Doncaster	6. Hartlepool	7. Histon	8. Kidderminster	9. Mansfield	10. Notts County
Sixth Division									
1. Bury	2. Cambridge	3. Chesham	4. Darlington	5. Doncaster	6. Hartlepool	7. Histon	8. Kidderminster	9. Mansfield	10. Notts County
Seventh Division									
1. Bury	2. Cambridge	3. Chesham	4. Darlington	5. Doncaster	6. Hartlepool	7. Histon	8. Kidderminster	9. Mansfield	10. Notts County
Eighth Division									
1. Bury	2. Cambridge	3. Chesham	4. Darlington	5. Doncaster	6. Hartlepool	7. Histon	8. Kidderminster	9. Mansfield	10. Notts County
Ninth Division									
1. Bury	2. Cambridge	3. Chesham	4. Darlington	5. Doncaster	6. Hartlepool	7. Histon	8. Kidderminster	9. Mansfield	10. Notts County
Tenth Division									
1. Bury	2. Cambridge	3. Chesham	4. Darlington	5. Doncaster	6. Hartlepool	7. Histon	8. Kidderminster	9. Mansfield	10. Notts County
Eleventh Division									
1. Bury	2. Cambridge	3. Chesham	4. Darlington	5. Doncaster	6. Hartlepool	7. Histon	8. Kidderminster	9. Mansfield	10. Notts County
Twelfth Division									
1. Bury	2. Cambridge	3. Chesham	4. Darlington	5. Doncaster	6. Hartlepool	7. Histon	8. Kidderminster	9. Mansfield	10. Notts County
Thirteenth Division									
1. Bury	2. Cambridge	3. Chesham	4. Darlington	5. Doncaster	6. Hartlepool	7. Histon	8. Kidderminster	9. Mansfield	10. Notts County
Fourteenth Division									
1. Bury	2. Cambridge	3. Chesham	4. Darlington	5. Doncaster	6. Hartlepool	7. Histon	8. Kidderminster	9. Mansfield	10. Notts County
Fifteenth Division									
1. Bury	2. Cambridge	3. Chesham	4. Darlington	5. Doncaster	6. Hartlepool	7. Histon	8. Kidderminster	9. Mansfield	10. Notts County
Sixteenth Division									
1. Bury	2. Cambridge	3. Chesham	4. Darlington	5. Doncaster	6. Hartlepool	7. Histon	8. Kidderminster	9. Mansfield	10. Notts County
Seventeenth Division									
1. Bury	2. Cambridge	3. Chesham	4. Darlington	5. Doncaster	6. Hartlepool	7. Histon	8. Kidderminster	9. Mansfield	10. Notts County
Eighteenth Division									
1. Bury	2. Cambridge	3. Chesham	4. Darlington	5. Doncaster	6. Hartlepool	7. Histon	8. Kidderminster	9. Mansfield	10. Notts County
Nineteenth Division									
1. Bury	2. Cambridge	3. Chesham	4. Darlington	5. Doncaster	6. Hartlepool	7. Histon	8. Kidderminster	9. Mansfield	10. Notts County
Twentieth Division									
1. Bury	2. Cambridge	3. Chesham	4. Darlington	5. Doncaster	6. Hartlepool	7. Histon	8. Kidderminster	9. Mansfield	10. Notts County
Twenty-first Division									
1. Bury	2. Cambridge	3. Chesham	4. Darlington	5. Doncaster	6. Hartlepool	7. Histon	8. Kidderminster	9. Mansfield	10. Notts County
Twenty-second Division									
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Hundredth Division									

Wasps on the verge
The Courage League title may be settled today, page 28

sport

Incredible journey
Barnsley are on their way to the Premiership, page 31

Hoddle sets target for Gascoigne

United's summer ruling on Cantona

Football

MIKE ROWBOTTOM

England's coach, Glenn Hoddle, yesterday outlined the challenge that lies ahead for Paul Gascoigne if he is ever to re-establish himself in the national side.

While Hoddle, who played himself until he was 38, held out hope for the Rangers player, he nevertheless made it clear that much work was still to be done before the possibility of an England return could be entertained. "I have spoken to Paul and his manager Walter

Smith at length," Hoddle said. "Unfortunately, Paul hasn't had a year free from injury for several years and his first port of call now is to sort that out."

Hoddle made clear that if Gascoigne was to return to his best after his latest ankle injury, it would require "a lot of prevention work". He added: "There are some things he needs to change in his life. It is partly to do with the mental side of things. He has to realise that you can't do at 30 the things you used to get away with when you were 21."

Asked if he felt that Gascoigne ever would play again for England, Hoddle responded: "I can't give you that answer. That

is something that needs to be addressed to Paul."

But Hoddle made it clear that Gascoigne would not be ruled out on the grounds of age alone. "There have been some very fine players at 35 years of age. Franco Baresi, for example. Nowadays if you keep control of things I think there is a future for players of 34, 35. And it will be no different for Paul if he can achieve that."

Hoddle played down the perennial newspaper reports cataloguing Gascoigne's misdemeanours, without completely denying them. "Probably 75 per cent of what you hear happening to Paul in his life is fiction."

But, yeah, there are facts there that need to be dealt with."

Asked whether he would prefer Gascoigne to move to an English club if - as has been rumoured - he left Rangers this summer, Hoddle replied that it would make little difference to his ability to help. "When players go back to their clubs after England matches it is a delicate situation. They are working for their managers then."

England's training was put back yesterday to enable players from Liverpool and Spurs who had played the previous night to join up with the squad. Hoddle acknowledged that there had been some work to do

with both Liverpool and Manchester United players after their European defeats this week. "Obviously they are a little bit down, and you would expect that," he said. "But now they have to pick themselves up and we have got a good spirit in the squad. Already there are a few jokes going round."

Hoddle accepted that only one result was acceptable against Georgia in Wednesday's World Cup qualifier. "We have to win because this group is so tight," he said. "The word is 'vigilant' for this. Georgia have got immense talent in midfield. We shacked that and passed the ball well over there. But I think in many ways

Wembley might suit them more than their own pitch."

While the squad is carrying fewer injuries than it was in the last three or four get-togethers, Hoddle reported that there were doubts over Stuart Pearce, Ian Walker and Robbie Fowler. Pearce is suffering from a calf injury while Walker, one of four goalkeepers in the squad, has an Achilles tendon problem. Fowler's problems appeared to be less serious - he received a knock in the match against Paris St Germain. There was some good news, too, as Hoddle was able to announce that his centre-half Tony Adams would resume training today.

The Rangers chairman David Murray yesterday backed his manager, Walter Smith who criticised Paul Gascoigne in Monday's *Independent*. However Murray also suggested that Gascoigne would be offered a new contract. "He's under contract for 15 months and although Walter has made his thoughts public I think it was the appropriate time to make it," said Murray.

"Walter said it when there was a gap period and I agree with his comments. But Rangers is bigger than Paul Gascoigne. We will sit down and hopefully extend his contract and that is all I have to say about it at the moment."

NICK HARRIS

Manchester United yesterday sought to play down reports that Eric Cantona's future at the club is under threat.

Martin Edwards, the chief executive and chairman at Old Trafford, said: "No discussions have taken place [with Eric] because these matters are always reviewed in the close season. Eric Cantona is under contract to us for another year, and there is no issue, no justification for this kind of speculation."

However, Cantona, 31 next month, has received no firm commitment about his future since his below-par performance in Wednesday's European Champions League exit against Borussia Dortmund, and there have been suggestions that for financial reasons, he will not get any such commitment.

Decisions about the trading of players, and negotiations surrounding players' contracts, are handled by two boards at Manchester United. The public limited company board are ultimately responsible to shareholders for all financial dealings, and the club board are responsible for the day-to-day running of the football team. The boards act in consultation with each other, but the final decision on Cantona's future lies with Martin Edwards and one non-executive director of the plc board.

Cantona is thought to earn around £750,000 a year and, should United decide not to offer him a new contract they may be willing to sell him this summer rather than let his contract run out - which would allow him to leave on a free transfer.

The Israeli international midfielder and captain Tal Ben Haim, 28, is expected to train with Liverpool next week with a view to joining the club next season. Ben Haim is out of contract and would not command a transfer fee.

The Newcastle manager Kenny Dalglish is expected to complete the signing of the Georgian midfielder Temur Ketsbaia today. Ketsbaia's contract with AEK Athens expires at the end of the season.

Steve Stone, the Nottingham Forest midfielder player who ruptured his knee in September, will not be able to play again until October.

In Monday's 20-page sports section

THE MONDAY INTERVIEW



"I'm interested in putting together sides capable of performing the whole range of techniques and skills, teams that can chew gum and walk simultaneously. The one thing rugby union has over every other game you care to mention is its multi-dimensional aspect - by comparison, rugby league is terribly one-dimensional - and if the only way you can win is by banging the ball in the air, you've achieved nothing. In my book, it's not just what you do, but how you do it."

Bob Dwyer, Leicester's Australian coach, talks to Chris Hewett about his first year in English rugby

Plus Glenn Moore and Phil Shaw on football

That Was The Weekend That Was, our alternative football guide

Ken Jones bids farewell to Cardiff Arms Park

Derick Allsop at the San Marino Grand Prix

What's the best way to end a nationwide water shortage? Start the cricket season...



Rain stops play between Surrey and Somerset at The Oval yesterday. It was the first prolonged rain in London for 33 days. Match reports, page 29; Photograph: Peter Jay

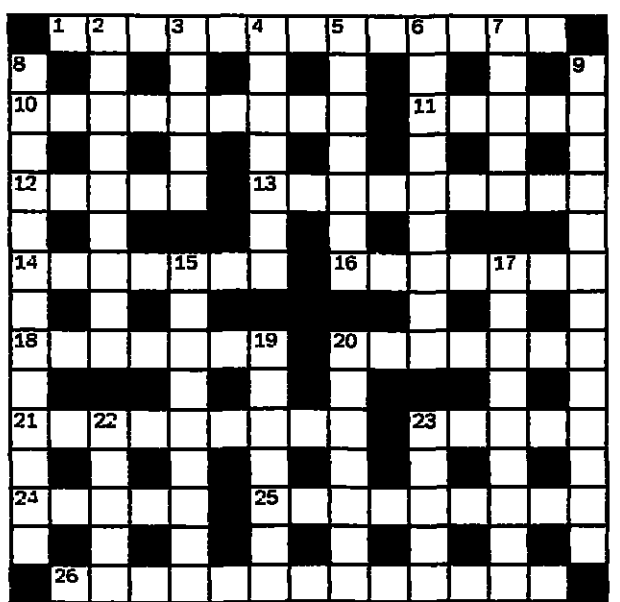
THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3283, Saturday 26 April

By Mass

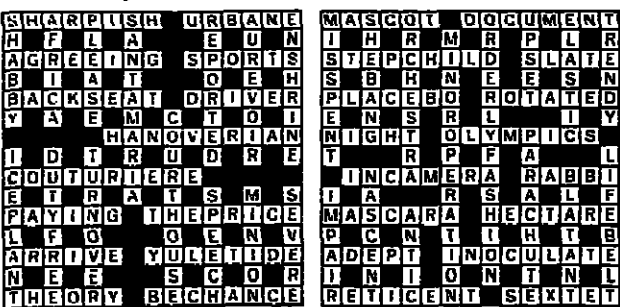
ACROSS

DOWN



Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution



- 1 It may well light up one's face! (5,2,3,3)
- 10 Train for English trip round North, on time (9)
- 11 Stur makes the European carp (5)
- 12 Figure crack goes with drink? (5)
- 13 Supplement upset Tories packing bar (9)
- 14 Never mind starter, cooker's working to produce a roast (7)
- 16 Ask about mission, plot backing reckless fire (7)
- 18 Finishes up the fruits (7)
- 20 Comparatively low bird sounds? (7)
- 21 English church tune, say, oddly included as part of suite (4-5)
- 23 One praised first-class accommodation, looking back (5)
- 24 Tipped second in race - fast on the outside (5)
- 25 Measures restricting free and easy school (9)
- 26 Piano lesson? (5,8)
- 2 Those in suits of satin interwoven with guilt (9)
- 3 Arrest in the act (5)
- 4 Attach a note written up for the European (7)
- 5 Locked the fool up? (7)
- 6 Filthy river, river choked with lead (9)
- 7 Excuse one after a party (5)
- 8 Man with Henry's quaffing a port with fish, mady (4,4,5)
- 9 Vehicle for girl travelling about Thursday (5,8)
- 15 Is he apt to ask brief questions? (9)
- 17 Tactless nuisance, clot twice berated (9)
- 19 Disturb fish in the drink (5,2)
- 20 Nick, cut around yellow floral feature (7)
- 22 Show's dispensed with piano score (5)
- 23 Gangster's feeling of guilt (5)

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive hardbacked copies of the new Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: M. Rushbrook, Wolverhampton; L. London, Shipley; M. Jeffries, Lowestoft; M. Watson, Luton; S. Pottman, Woodbridge.

Irvine earns Italian respect

Motor racing

DERICK ALLSOP reports from Imola

The promoters and the punters had what they wanted, and although customary Friday caution balanced the euphoria down in the Ferrari compound, they were content to claim the emergence of "the real Eddie Irvine". Buoyed by his second place in Argentina a fortnight ago, Irvine edged out his illustrious teammate, Michael Schumacher, to head the standings in unofficial practice for tomorrow's San Marino Grand Prix here.

It may, and probably will, be very different in today's qualifying session, both Schumacher and Irvine expecting Williams-Renault to assume their familiar positions at the front of the grid. Ferrari do, however, believe they are closing on the champions and Irvine is encouraged to feel he is no longer the distant partner to the imperious German.

Schumacher sought a final flourish yesterday, smoking his tyres and jumping the kerbs in a spectacular show that had the tifosi roaring their approval, and yet he failed to dislodge the Irishman by 0.01sec, barely the head of a pint of the black stuff.

Irvine, not so long ago reviled and slammed by the Italian media as unworthy of a ride on the revered Prancing Horse, is suddenly being welcomed into the embrace of this country. He may be renowned as a playboy, but he is not seduced this time. "One day you are a god, the next

a waste of space," he says.

There again, he does concede his result in Buenos Aires has had a positive effect. "It was bound to do something," he said. "The important thing is to keep the momentum going. One race won't convince anyone you are the reincarnation of Ayrton Senna."

"Getting the fastest time today is certainly better than crawling out of the back of the garage with 15th place. A win is not out of the question on Sunday, because we are in better

away from here with three points from a solid fourth place than throw it off going for a second that isn't really on."

Irvine is still yearning for more testing to achieve his potential at Ferrari. "I should be doing more than I'm doing now," he said. "It's not that Michael is doing more than he should, but that I'm not doing enough."

If he does enough to earn another appearance on the podium here he will stand beneath the Union Jack, on the orders of Max

It is the influence of an Englishman, Ross Brawn, that has reinforced Schumacher's faith in the Ferrari cause. Fresh speculation that Schumacher is destined for McLaren-Mercedes next season has been dismissed by the driver's sides as "garbage".

They say Brawn, the technical director recruited from Benetton-Renault where Schumacher twice won the championship, has already instilled his order and direction within a team notorious for acting before thinking.

Doubts about Benetton's sense of direction post-Schumacher have fed speculation that their managing director, Flavio Briatore, is bound for a new career move, but Gerhard Berger and Jean Alesi steered a steady course to third and fourth places yesterday. Berger would doubtless settle for such a result to celebrate his 200th Grand Prix on a circuit that provides a poignant setting for the occasion.

The Austrian said: "I saw my first grand prix at Imola and I had my first Formula One podium finish here. I also had my worst accident here [in 1989] and this was where we had the tragedy of Roland Ratzenberger's and Ayrton's deaths in 1994. So it is emotional for me and special for me to have my 200th grand prix here."

Johnny Herbert, the British Sauber-Petronas driver, reaches his first century here. He flexed his competitive muscles with 11th position in practice. Jacques Villeneuve, the championship leader, was fifth, David Coulthard sixth and Damon Hill 13th.



Snakebite: A new look for Ralf Schumacher's Jordan

shape than a lot of the others.

"If Williams had problems with their brakes in Melbourne then they will here. They should be better in qualifying but we appear to be pushing them in the race and if we push them here we may force them into errors."

Irvine, accused by certain fellow drivers as well as some pundits of erratic and even dangerous behaviour on the track, maintains he will be circumspect in tomorrow's race. He said: "I'd rather walk

Mosley, the president of FIA, motor sport's governing body. Irvine, who was accompanied by the tricolour of the Irish Republic in Argentina, said: "I wanted a neutral flag and a company has offered me one with a shamrock, but the matter has been taken out of my hands and I've been told it's got to be the Union Jack."

Schumacher says Irvine's elevation from mediocrity has come as no surprise to him. He said: "Eddie did a super job today, but we knew he was quick."

Neil, Leon & Co. To catch the polling station, catch the Eurostar from Brussels Station.

Don't get caught out on the big day - Eurostar will whip you into Waterloo in time for you to meet the polling station deadline. As you know, it goes directly from city centre to city centre (so no nasty swings either way). And it moves as fast as a candidate spying a photo opportunity. (well, almost - it only takes just over three hours). So whether you're in Brussels or Paris on election day, don't let John, Tony or Paddy down. Take the Eurostar. Unless of course you're voting Monster Raving Loony, in which case flying is a viable option.

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or see an appointed travel agent or railway station



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Emergency relief for May Day

William Hartston reviews alternative approaches to the general election

An overall majority of more than 300 for the Liberal Democrats is hardly in line with opinion poll forecasts, yet the achievements of constituency workers cannot be denied. When Vellow Games and Books produced the *Hustings* "The Parliamentary Election Board Game" their main marketing thrust was in two directions: schools, and political party offices. Since the rules of the game include the basics of parliamentary democracy – there is even a black ballot box supplied with the equipment – many schools have been quick to seize on its educational value, but the sales figures among the main political parties have been more surprising. While the Labour and Conservative parties have sold just under 100 sets each, the Liberal Democrats have shifted more than 500. Three theories have been suggested by the makers of the game to explain this Lib-Dem landslide: 1) the Lib Dems have significantly greater need for funds; 2) they have significantly greater need for fun; 3) they realise it's the only way they're going to win anything.

Politics apart, the game is played in four stages. First, the nomination: each player throws the dice and moves a piece round the board hoping to land on "Ward" spaces, where rosettes may be collected. Three rosettes must be taken to a "Returning Officer" square to secure nomination. Stage two is a race round the board to visit all the wards and collect unallocated votes to deposit in the ballot box. Meanwhile, there are the hazards of Media cards (for example: "You are involved in a major press scandal, miss six turns") and the choices offered by Campaign cards ("Your bandwagon is gaining momentum. Either gain 500 votes or take two extra turns"). Public Meetings and Opinion Polls can also affect the play.

Stage three takes the postal votes into account (the number each player receives is decided solely on the throw of the dice), and stage four is the final count and declaration of the result. No speeches by

Two games for democrats: campaigning for votes in the Hustings constituency – or riding the tide of sleaze in Snap Election!



the winners, though you can calculate figures for turn-out, majority, and swing from the last time you played.

There is, it must be admitted, very little skill involved, but the game is attractively designed, and is a playful way to teach the elements of parliamentary democracy.

The *Hustings* is available from selected retailers (£19.99) or by mail order direct from Vellow (Games & Books) Limited, Willow House, Dragon Road, Winterbourne, Bristol BS17 1BJ (01454-775050 for details).

Snap Election! is designed to appeal to a rather different constituency. Rather than trying to teach the fundamentals of electoral regulations, this game can really only be played by people who are thoroughly familiar with all the squalor of our electoral system at its worst. Here's a sample paragraph from the rules:

"If you occupy the Moral High Ground (ie you have acquired no Sleaze Marks at all) you may at any time launch a Moral Crusade against any opponent who has accumulated 2 or more Sleaze Marks. In order to do this you need to land on the same square as this opponent. She must then roll the Rollercoaster Dice and follow the instructions detailed below. If you have led a somewhat sleazy campaign

and, to avoid the risk of a Moral Crusade, want to 'desleaze', you must head in good time to the Media Circus. You are required to stay there for 2 turns in order for your Charm Offensive to be successful. You may then remove one Sleaze Mark from your Ballot Box and resume the game. (You must stay there 2 turns for each Sleaze Mark you wish to 'desleaze'.")

Is that all clear? Good. Then all you have to do is familiarise yourself with the rules about Live TV Debates, Swing Votes (for which Manifesto Cards may not be traded in), Banana Skins, Opinion Poll-Booster, Electoral Pacts and Political Timebombs and you will be ready to start thinking about your Target Policy and whether your strategy should be to cultivate the votes of the Jobless, OAPs, Haves, Have-nots, or any of the other groups identified in the game as being worth pursuing.

And then you'll be ready to take your place on the extraordinary spaghetti junction of a playing area in which counters may be sent on various roundabout-infested routes (but with no No U-turns in the side roads and in the Political Minefield), trying to avoid the Political Wilderness and the Sin Bin.

The greatest fun comes from the Banana Skin cards – which may lose votes for such transgressions as promoting a grey nonentity as your successor, or misspelling "potato" – and the Sleaze cards, which offer opportunities of instant gain at the risk of incurring a later Sleaze Offensive.

This must be the perfect thing to do as you are sitting in front of your television set late into election night, waiting for the election results to come in and trying not to let Peter Snow's swingometer lull you to sleep. The game's inventor, Martin Armitage-Smith, warns, however, that "it certainly makes for a better game if somebody has the decency to take the Moral High Ground though sadly this does not always happen".

The bewildering complexity of the rules guarantees an endless supply of good-natured arguments, and the whole experience will, no doubt, enable the participants to emerge with a heightened perspective of the underlying principles behind our electoral process.

Snap Election! is available at selected stores, price £35. Further details from Prowler Productions (0171-402-8063).

Games people play

Pandora Melly learns what Scouts do with shrapnel

Bryan Kneale RA, 66, sculptor

I don't play games. I don't have any hobbies whatsoever, but when I was little I had a wonderful book called *The Boy's Book of Hobbits*. It told you everything from "building a home museum" to "taxidermy", and it was full of misinformation. For example under "How to skin a rabbit" it suggested that if you slit the rabbit's tummy, then slid your hand around the back, the whole animal would slip neatly out of its skin "as smoothly as a finger from a glove" – which is simply not true. Rabbits' tails are stuck on like nobody's business. There was also a section on Scouting, with a picture of a Scout looking tremendous in his hat and woggle, and although I was underage, I managed to join the Isle of Man Scout Troop.

The Scoutmaster was a very weird gentleman called Mr. Fritchard, who had been crippled in the First World War. The two interesting things about him were

the undersides of his shoes, which had never been in contact with the ground. Also, if you were really lucky and could sing in a high treble voice, which I couldn't, he'd show you the bits of shrapnel moving round in his veins.

Instead of camping in the countryside, he made us collect jam jars, which he wanted to send to England to help the war effort. We collected and washed every jam jar on the island, but of course the Navy were not going to risk a ship to transport jam jars, so we put them into an empty shop and built an incredible glass palace with a tunnel leading through it. At one end, like an old spider, sat the dreadful Mr. Fritchard showing people his shrapnel. I've never played any game since, and I blame it all on *The Boy's Book of Hobbits*.

Jam jars may be found surrounding 340 grams of Fortnum & Mason's rose petal jelly (£5.75) – available only at certain times of year, owing to the vast quantity of petals needed.

Don't junk it... use it

How to sell your house and store your pencils

Children, I have deduced from visits to the homes of some of my more proactive colleagues, are untidy things that tend to leave large numbers of pencils, crayons and felt-tip pens lying around table, floors and anywhere else they are allowed to smear their grubby little hands on. Here is a neat solution to the problem.

All you need is a sharp knife or scissors, and an estate agent's sign. The latter may be procured by the simple expedient of selling your house. (If desperate, you may even forget to pack the crayons when you move, or leave the children behind without a forwarding address.) When the house is sold, you will find yourself in possession of a sturdy "For Sale" board thrown away in delight by the estate agent.



or ball-point pen. For marker pens, or your piston-filling Montblanc hand-crafted 18-carat gold nib with platinum inlay Solitaire solid gold fountain pen (large), you will need to cut through more corrugations.

Slip a piece of string – from your collection saved from the handles of upmarket shopping bags – through the top channel, and hang the pencil collection above your desk just out of the children's reach.

Note that estate agents' boards are generally supplied and owned by contractors, so you should not dismantle any that have not clearly been discarded. When you have acquired and dismantled one, however, do remember also to save the plastic nuts and bolts that held it together. They are very useful in notebooks to hold punched papers, or for fast repairs to bag handles.

Bawn O'Beirne-Ranelagh

William Hartston's chess column will return next week

The effect of sunspot activity on British general election results

In 1979, the Journal of the British Astronomical Association published a paper entitled "Sunspots and general elections", by Prof Kenneth McKinnon and Dr Sven Wincke of the Astrophysical Research Group at the University of the North-East Atlantic (or Rockall Polytechnic, as it then was). We have tracked down the authors, who have been updating their original material.

As Dr Wincke explained, the results had identified a correlation between the Conservative Party's performance in elections, and sunspot activity. The table in the next column compares the results of the Conservatives with the Wolf's sunspot numbers in the election month.

Effects of sunspots on elections:

Sunspot No	Year	Tory majority
6.1	1964	-13
17.4	1967	+147
25.3	1966	-110
26.0	1974 (Feb)	-4
28.9	1955	+67
42.6	1945	-180
47.1	1974 (Oct)	-42
51.6	1951	+26
91.1	1983	+188
94.8	1950	-17
99.8	1992	+65
106.8	1970	+43
111.4	1959	+107
134.4	1979	+70

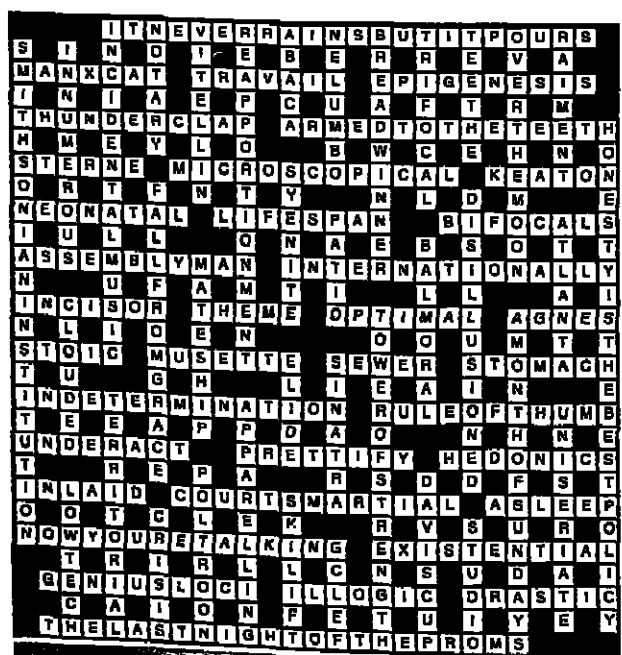
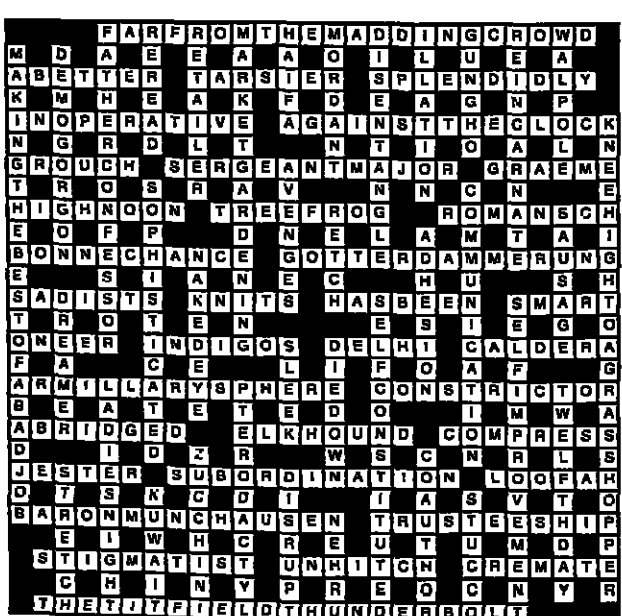
"By arranging the table in increasing order of sunspot activity," Dr Wincke explained, "the threshold effect is clear." The third column indicates the Tory majority over Labour (negative numbers for Labour victories). "When the sunspot number is below 50, we have had five Labour victories out of seven post-war elections; but when it exceeds 50, we see six Conservative wins out of seven."

He admitted, however, that he and his colleague did not agree on the causality of the observed effect. While Dr Wincke believes that people's intention to vote Conservative causes a perturbation in the sun's magnetic field, Prof McKinnon believes that sunspots release particles

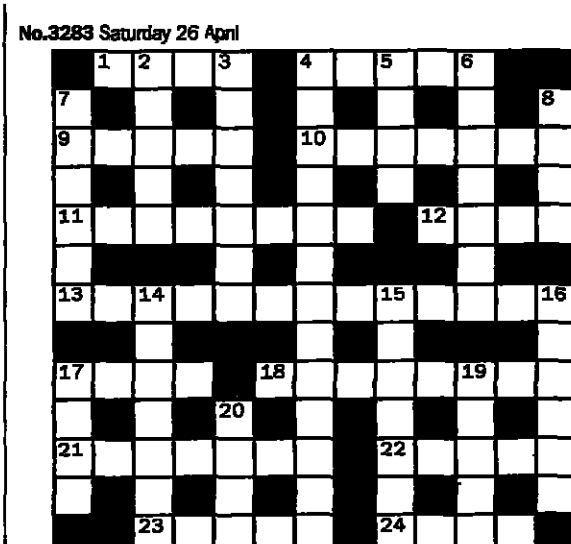
called "votons" that alter the behaviour of the electorate.

On one thing, however, they are agreed. "We cannot understand," said Dr Wincke, "why you British are bothering with opinion polls, when science offers a precise alternative." Since he does not yet have the April figures for sunspots, he is unable to make a prediction for next week's election, but points out that the March figure of 8.8 looks grim for the Tories, unless there is a sudden outbreak of solar activity. In 1992, however, this method led to a prediction of a Tory majority of 23 – almost exactly right. As Dr Wincke says: "It was the sun who won it for them."

Jumbo crossword answers



Concise crossword



- ACROSS
- Long and limp (4)
 - Expect (5)
 - Bird of prey (7)
 - Fairground (9)
 - Mark of approval (4)
 - Get-together (7)
 - Madman (6)
 - Footwear item (4)
 - Diverse (7)
 - Flavouring (7)
 - Precipitate (6)
 - Charis (4)
 - Poisonous snake (5)
 - Volcanic flow (4)
- DOWN
- Long and limp (4)
 - Expect (5)
 - Bird of prey (7)
 - Fairground (9)
 - Mark of approval (4)
 - Get-together (7)
 - Madman (6)
 - Footwear item (4)
 - Diverse (7)
 - Flavouring (7)
 - Precipitate (6)
 - Charis (4)
 - Poisonous snake (5)
 - Volcanic flow (4)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:
ACROSS: 1. Marshal, 5. Harts (Marshall), 8. Valid, 9. Victory, 10. Emancipate, 11. Aisle, 12. Unhappy, 14. Bannister, 17. Ropes, 18. Sprong, 22. Confess, 23. Hoped, 24. Ticks, 25. Whetstone, 26. DOWN: 1. Movie, 2. Release, 3. Hedge, 4. Hoops, 5. Hedger, 6. Kiosk, 7. Synapse, 12. Upright, 13. Salvage, 15. Inspire, 16. Eschew, 18. Vault, 20. Centre, 21. Ridge.

Bridge Alan Hiron

Game all; dealer South
North
♠ 9 8 6 4
♥ A 8 5 2
♦ none
♣ A 6 5 4 2
West
♠ 2
♥ K J 10
♦ Q 10 8 5 3
♣ K J 9 8
East
♠ 10 7
♥ 9 4
♦ K 7 6 4 2
♣ Q 10 7 3
South
♠ A K Q J 5 3
♥ Q 7 6 3
♦ A J 9
♣ none

Carried away by his distribution and controls, North did too much bidding on this deal. Fortunately his partner was more cautious and they ended in a sensible contract. Less fortunately, South missed a slight extra chance in the play that would have made all the difference.

South opened 1♣ and North responded 4♣ – a splinter purporting to show diamond shortage, spade support, and game-going values. (As the young lady said of her fiancé: "He's tall,

dark and... oh well, two out of three can't be too bad.") South cue bid 5♣ and North, still not satisfied, repeated his diamond bid to show a void. South jumped to 6♣ and, believe it or not, North had the nerve to think before passing.

West led ♦ 5 and declarer saw matters in a simple light. He won, drew trumps, ruffed a diamond, then led the ace and another heart. It was all over, for West now had two heart tricks to cash.

What was the extra chance that South missed? Suppose he ruffs the opening lead on the table and trumps a low club in hand. He continues cross-ruffing in the minor suits (yes, including ruffing ♦ A for the extra entry that he needs – after all, one heart discard from dummy would not have helped) and finally draws trumps. Then he crosses to ♥ A and tries ♣ A. If the adverse clubs are 4-4, he has two heart discards from hand and can claim; and if the clubs do not behave, there is still the basic chance of finding a favourable heart position.

Perplexity

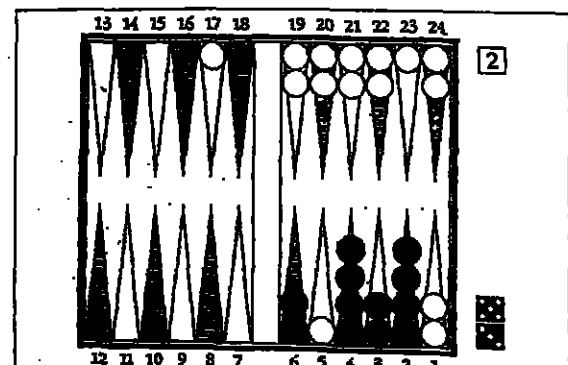
Two weeks ago, we asked which April dates could not be turned into valid sums using specified arithmetical signs. The ones that don't work are 1.4.97, 3.4.97, 9.4.97, 10.4.97 and 30.4.97. (Of the rest, the 27th and 19th caused most problems: 2x7x(-4)+9=-7 and (-1+9)+4=9-7. The best set of answers came from Mike Shepherd of London SE21.

Now, naturally enough, we want to know which dates in May

cannot turn into valid sums. Note a slight change in the rules: this time we allow only +, -, ×, ÷, = and as many brackets as you want. (Last time we allowed power-raising exponents too.)

A prize of the *Chambers 21st Century Dictionary* will be awarded to the sender of the best set of answers. Entries by 6 May to: Perplexity, *The Independent*, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

Backgammon Chris Bray



Here is a more difficult example of a "Pay me now/ Pay me later" problem. In the diagram position Black has a 5-3 to play. He has already borne off 3 men. He has two choices: (a) 3/Off or (b) 6/3. In both cases he cannot play the 5. Note that the rules of backgammon state that you must play as much of your roll as possible. If you can play only one of two numbers, you must play the larger if you can. Here you cannot play the 5 whatever you do.

Play (a) leaves 11 immediate shots – all the twos. Play (b) leaves 20 shots – all fours and ones. Normally in such a problem the correct play is the one that leaves the least shots. However, in this case it is worth looking at what happens if White misses the first shot. With play (a) Black will leave a shot only if he rolls 6-6, 5-5, 4-4, 3-3 on his next turn – a total of four rolls. With play (b) he will leave a single shot with 6-1, 6-2, 6-4, 6-6, 5-2, 5-4, 5-5, 4-2, 4-4, 3-1, 3-3, and 2-2 (19 rolls), and a double shot with 6-5 and 5-1 (four rolls). Even if these shots are missed Black will still have a difficult position in many of the cases, and will often be hit on the third or subsequent roll.

Quite often in backgammon intuition can play a part, and to those experienced in the game the position after play (b) just looks so much better than the position after play (a).

The disjointed nature of the black position after play (a) makes play (b) the right choice in this instance. White will win 50 per cent of the time after play (a) but only 45 per cent of the time after play (b). Note, though, that this type of play, leaving a significant number of extra shots in the original position, is correct only when the alternatives leave a position which will lead to large numbers of additional shots on the very next turn.

The Ruth and Rose experience



John Walsh
has lunch at...
The River Café

Greta Garbo ate there once, apparently. Tina Turner has a tendency to embrace the waiters. Lucien Freud is hardly ever out of the place. Martina Navratilova might as well have had a season ticket, dining there whenever she won Wimbledon. Will Self goes a lot, without having to worry about anyone examining his pupils after a trip to the gents. John Mortimer and Jeremy Paxman and the rest of the Henley-on-Thames mafia sometimes take over the whole place for fund-raising quiz evenings. Mick Jagger and David Bowie have sat quietly examining the menu, like ordinary human beings, trying to endure the creek of turning heads. And if Tony Blair makes it to Downing Street on Friday, it won't be long before he too makes the journey west, to discuss the politicisation of the Mayorship of London with his friend Richard (Lord) Rogers.

It is, of course, the River Café – that cynosure of gastro-erotic Nineties London chic, that glossy, metallic Hammersmith home of *cucina rustica*, that is, Italian peasant food that no Italian peasant from Turin to Palermo could ever afford. This autumn, it celebrates 10 years of *polenta and porcini*, 10 years of unfassably thick, take-your-stomach-home-in-a-wheelbarrow bean soups and tidal waves of balsamic vinegar, 10 years of charred this and brushed that, of *insalata and insalino*, of *bruschetta and ribotta*, *pangrattato, cannellini*...

And the women who own and run the River Café have become as famous as the place – though in a way that's significantly different from the standard-issue restaurateur. Ruth Rogers and Rose Gray do a lot of the cooking themselves, in starchily white uniforms with stray strands of sweaty hair flicked behind their ears, but they're known less as celebrity chefs hungry for Michelin rosettes than as joint hostesses of a busily airy salon. The opening of our restaurant coincided with the decline of the pompous male chef who made you feel

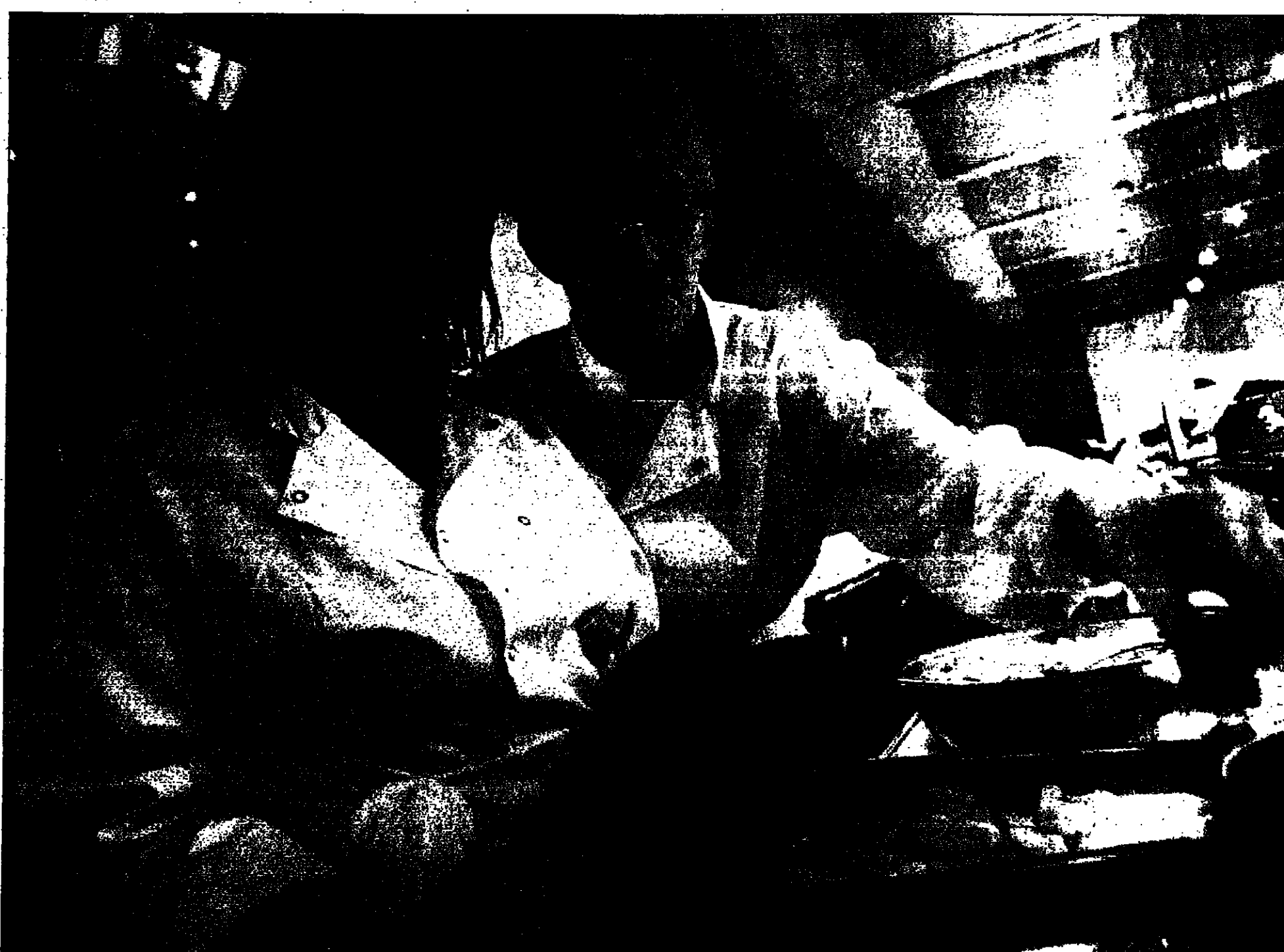
Rose and I are both from large families – we wanted the place to be an extension of the way we ate

hunk by the door is called Dante. He checks a booking in the ledger and summons a waitress of heart-breaking beauty with the words "Vasaité – would you mind?" You suspect that if somebody called Jane ever got a job here, she would be magically renamed Fuschia or Neferitti by nightfall.

Rose Gray appears. The older of the partners, she is lean-faced and headmistress, but her conversation is warm and her eyes sparkle. She orders the staff around with cod-bossiness ("Out of the way, you lot. I saw you trying to sneak into the photograph..."). When the wine is poured for her inspection, she inserts her nose into the glass like a crane with a water-jug. Her expression changes. Her brows knit. Something is not right. You can almost hear the wine quaking with apprehension, nervy ripples on its oxidised surface. She packs the offending vintage off to "Bottle Detention" with utter confidence.

We are joined by Ruth Rogers. Looks-wise, she is frankly Gabby Roslin's elder sister, with straw-blond hair and milky-blue eyes. A former Sixties radical and the wife of Richard Rogers, she is socially adroit and oceanically well-connected, from the Oval Office to the Foreign Office. They're an intriguing pair, Ruth a flatterer, Rose a straight-talker, both cautiously protective of the Café's reputation, both clearly delighted to have been so comprehensively "taken up" by the media establishment and the chef community alike.

"When we started," said Rose, "everybody said, 'Oh, the restaurant business, it's so competitive.' But we grew into the generation of Kensington Place and Bibendum and the boys at Le Caprice and the Ivy, and they've all been very generous and supportive. If we have a problem, they'll help us out. All the great chefs of the world come through the River Café now – people like Michael Chow and Alice Waters [of Chez



Ruth Rogers (left) and Rose Gray: 10 years of polenta paradise
Photo: Nicola Kurtz

Panisse, the north Californian home of organic cooking and the River Café's biggest influence). And even though we're not going in the same direction as Marco [Pierre White] and Nico [Ladenis] and creating food in complex ways, they recognise what we're trying to do." Which is? "Trying to cook Italian food to a sublime degree. Trying to do it to perfection."

"Perfectionism" is an odd word. It takes the concept of utter rightness and holds it at arm's length, as though there were something neurotic and pernickety about wanting such a thing. Ruth and Rose are perfectionists in ways that can seem both good and slightly absurd. About vegetables, for example, they are as doctrinaire as any tabloid-conceived EU commissioner laying down the law about straight bananas. In the pages of their new book, *River Café Cook Book Two*, you learn, for instance, that beetroot must be "the size of golfballs", fig salad should comprise either "purple basil and ripe green figs" but never a combination of the two. They even specify the kind of salt you should use (Maldon)... Did they believe in some Platonic theory of ideal food?

"Of course, there's such a thing as a perfect zucchini," said Rose Gray. "It has to be organically grown and picked when it tastes best, which is [she extended a bony forefinger] when it's slightly longer than your first finger, and before the seeds have developed inside. Because after they've developed, the flesh gets softer and watery and you won't get the intense flavour." "Our cooking is all about flavour," interjected Ruth. "If you have an anchovy that's salted or a zucchini that's marinated, you're going to get the best out of it. I'd have thought it was a matter of taste, but only a madman would dream of contradicting Lady Rogers in full, idealistic flow. "What Rose and I want is for things to be in season, to cook them as close as possible to their best. We don't want raspberries in January, don't want microwaves, don't want anything frozen. And there's a certain excitement about saying to people, it's nearly May / June and the melons are coming soon. And then they'll be gone in

a month's time and something else will be here. Right now the asparagus is at its best, and we'll cook it like mad for a while, they'll stop and you won't get it for another year."

And in case you're wondering how the River Café ladies can sit in Hammersmith, London W6 and talk about their "zucchini" rather than their "courgettes", it's because of their scrupulousness about everything being genuinely Italian. Their vegetables may be grown by English suppliers, but they're grown from seeds acquired in Italy. "We look around," said Rose, "and go to the shops that sell the seeds that produced the vegetables that appear in the market. We're terribly selective: this particular pumpkin, these particular cabbages. There's a man in Southampton who grows herbs for us – wonderful oregano, marjoram, basil, fantastic varieties of thyme and sage, and Italian flat-leaf parsley. And there's a Sicilian farmer called Mario just off the M25 who grows piles of rocket and *prezioso*, winter leaves, broad beans..."

But did it have to be Italian? Would anyone be terribly distressed if you included Thai lemon-grass or Mexican beans or, I dunno, English rose petals in a dish if it made it taste more interesting. Didn't they get tired of Italian ingredients? "That's like saying, 'Do you get tired of speaking English all day and would you like to speak a bit of French,'" said Ruth severely. Surely, I said, it's more like dropping the odd italicised French word into an English sentence in the interests of a lively style. She set her jaw. "We are committed *totally* to this Italian food experience, which is changing all the time and we will change with it. But I don't think we'll ever plant our own corn on it." "And anyway," put in Rose, diplomatically, "Italian cuisine has so many surprises. It's an inspiration, to go to a part of Italy and find that they use cinnamon in tomato paste. Or going to

Capri and finding a salad of boiled lemons and artichoke. Even things that seem taboo to their cooking – like coriander, which you'd think would be strictly Oriental. It turns up in Italian food because it came up the African coast..."

How they love talking about food, even just naming the names – and with what rapt and greedy relish they taste everything on everybody's plate. My lunch with Ruth and Rose was punctuated by a kind of crockery square dance, in which I swapped plates with Ruth halfway through, so she could try my *mozzarella di bufala* with char-grilled aubergines and I could feast on Ruth's wood-roasted asparagus with gull's eggs, olives and salted anchovies; and just as I was resolving that *no-one* was gonna take this away from me, I swapped plates with Rose to try her tagliatelli with bread crumbs and marcapone and was glad I did.

It's an odd trajectory that has brought these very different women to this perfectionist haven. Ruth is from upstate New York ("Way upstate," she says. "You know Kingston? Poughkeepsie? Woodstock?") where her father was a radically-minded doctor and her mother a teacher. After school in Vermont, she discovered London in 1968, got involved in helping draft-resisting young Americans and went out with an Oxford Rhodes scholar (tantalisingly, a year after Bill Clinton was there). Like Rose, she worked as a graphic designer, at Penguin Books, and discovered the world of European cuisine by dining out every night in Paris when her architect husband was designing the Beaubourg Centre.

Rose is from Surrey. Her father was a balloon engineer who died before she was born, in a ghastly accident in the house beside the balloon shed. "I have literally only just discovered this story," said Rose. "I saw his grave for the first time three weeks ago. Nobody spoke about it, and my mother used to pretend he died in the war. Perhaps because of having a

secretive mother, I've always been very enquiring about my origins, about food and gardening." She studied fine art at Guildford, taught art at Shoreditch Comprehensive, then raised four children and learned her cooking skills at the family hob. For a time, she made crêpes in the intervals of rock concerts at the Rainbow and other venues, then left for America where a friend invited her to be head chef in a new restaurant.

The girls met in the mid-Seventies – Rose was an old friend of the first Mrs Rogers and shared a passion for Italian food, largely through the influence of Richard's Trieste-born mother, Dada. "She was the first Italian cook I met in London," says Rose, "I was 18 and we were all students, and she used to cook food one had never eaten in one's life." It all came together in 1986 when Rogers bought the Hammersmith warehouses to convert into his architecture practice and designated the site of the present restaurant an eatery. "I looked through application from caterers, and they were just dreadful," remembers Ruth. "I thought the only thing worse than not having an eating place was having a bad one. So I called up Rose and we sat down over coffee in Drummond's in the King's Road one morning in 1986 and said 'Shall we do it?' and that was that."

Ten years later, they've done OK. Apart from the drift of international chefdom across their deep blue carpets, they were described by no less than the *New Yorker* as serving "the best Italian food in Europe" – that's including Italy – and their cook book has sat like a prize marrow in the bestseller lists since it was published. Their refusal to cook beef or veal (because they can't get convincing guarantees out of meat suppliers) has more influence on London eaters than any amount of ministerial reassurance. And to be given lunch there, between the metal curtain housing their chefs and the huge window with the view of their herb garden, is at least one guarantee of true love or serious intent in these uncertain times. Where food, power, charm and fastidiousness are the ingredients, the River Café is a dish that's perilously close to perfection itself.

Actually, the plot is rather more complex. Paul Elliott, head of ENB productions, which is staging the panto, tells me he has been after Dudley Moore for five years, believing him a Buttons sent from heaven. Elliott has long wanted to convert the Americans to panto, and if Moore makes 'em laugh in Southampton, it could be next stop Broadway with a panto star the Americans have actually heard of. So Southampton could yet have a historic part to play in international theatre.

“We don't want raspberries in January, don't want microwaves, don't want anything frozen”

form St Matthew's Passion, it would be a great night out, but you wouldn't necessarily want or expect all future recitals to be in the same mode.

Perhaps there is a lack on stage today of the past boldness of Trevor Nunn's musical *Comedy of Errors* from the Seventies and Bill Alexander's 1950s nostalgia *Merry Wives* from the Eighties. But these, like the "Verona Beach" *Romeo and Juliet* will always be glorious alternatives. Authenticity in staging a great classical text can demand some preparation from the audience; it certainly repays study. But that does not make it elitist, any more than a classical music concert or a TV adaptation

of *Pride and Prejudice* is elitist. To call Shakespeare on stage elitist is worryingly patronising to the bulk of schoolchildren and students, especially worrying when the assertion comes from a professor of English.

To prove that nothing is elitist in this postmodern age, rock star David Bowie is to move into publishing art books. Bowie, along with gallery owner Bernard Jacobson and *Modern Painters* editor Karen Wright, will launch 21, their new art-book publishing venture with a state of the art party in May. David Bowie enthuses "21 is the future. It will revolutionise art publishing in this country." Why

21? "It's art publishing in the 21st century," Bowie explains. "It's because all three of us are well over 21," adds one of his two colleagues equally accurately.

In Tom Stoppard's play *Night and Day*, a journalist from the *Grimsby Evening Telegraph* being patronised by one from *The Sunday Globe* retorts that the *Grimsby Evening Telegraph* is more important in Grimsby any day of the week than *The Sunday Globe* is around the globe. I was reminded of this by the general laughter this week over Dudley Moore forsaking Hollywood to appear in panto at the Southampton Mayflower Theatre. To which they might well retort on

birth date: 1945 (US); 1947 (UK); 1948 (US); 1949 (UK); 1950 (US); 1951 (UK); 1952 (US); 1953 (UK); 1954 (US); 1955 (UK); 1956 (US); 1957 (UK); 1958 (US); 1959 (UK); 1960 (US); 1961 (UK); 1962 (US); 1963 (UK); 1964 (US); 1965 (UK); 1966 (US); 1967 (UK); 1968 (US); 1969 (UK); 1970 (US); 1971 (UK); 1972 (US); 1973 (UK); 1974 (US); 1975 (UK); 1976 (US); 1977 (UK); 1978 (US); 1979 (UK); 1980 (US); 1981 (UK); 1982 (US); 1983 (UK); 1984 (US); 1985 (UK); 1986 (US); 1987 (UK); 1988 (US); 1989 (UK); 1990 (US); 1991 (UK); 1992 (US); 1993 (UK); 1994 (US); 1995 (UK); 1996 (US); 1997 (UK); 1998 (US); 1999 (UK); 2000 (US); 2001 (UK); 2002 (US); 2003 (UK); 2004 (US); 2005 (UK); 2006 (US); 2007 (UK); 2008 (US); 2009 (UK); 2010 (US); 2011 (UK); 2012 (US); 2013 (UK); 2014 (US); 2015 (UK); 2016 (US); 2017 (UK); 2018 (US); 2019 (UK); 2020 (US); 2021 (UK); 2022 (US); 2023 (UK); 2024 (US); 2025 (UK); 2026 (US); 2027 (UK); 2028 (US); 2029 (UK); 2030 (US); 2031 (UK); 2032 (US); 2033 (UK); 2034 (US); 2035 (UK); 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arts & books

Lord of the trance

Steven Berkoff, mad dog of stage and screen, is about to be unleashed on vinyl. John O'Reilly meets pop's new pin-up

What is Steven Berkoff playing at? Why is one of our greatest contemporary dramatists, the author of *Greek* and *Decadence*, hanging out with a dance band called N-Trance, a band known mainly for shifting ludicrous quantities of singles – "Set You Free" (3.4 million), the remixed "Stayin' Alive" (1.5 million) and "D.I.S.C.O." (still counting). And what, more to the point, is a dance outfit hankering after youth appeal doing putting the voice of a 60-year-old on its new album and single?

According to N-Trance's mixmasters Dale Longworth and Kevin O'Toole, the story goes like this: they were about to go into production for their new album, *The Mind of the Machine*, when they saw *Beverly Hills Cop*, in which Berkoff appears as an art dealing villain, a variation on a role that has become his screen trademark, from the sci-fi corporate nasty in *Outland* to the Eastern Bloc rogue in *Octopussy*. The inspiration for the album was an article about the hugely powerful IBM computer Deep Blue. The piece summoned up a familiar futuristic nightmare of computers generating other computers and bypassing their human creators. The band wanted an actor who could imitate the voice of a machine. Berkoff's delivery and face seem to guarantee maliciously detached violence.

Longworth says: "We wanted a Richard Burton-type tone and thought of Anthony

Hopkins. Then we saw *Beverly Hills Cop* and we heard this great voice, powerful and completely scary. We looked through Steven's back-catalogue and he's got the right kind of image for it. Pure evil." So were they surprised that he agreed? "When we first got in contact with his agent, he rang our record company back and said he thought we were taking the piss. We didn't believe it either, though, when he said yes."

When I arrived at the studio, the band were listening to Berkoff doing a convincing imitation of an automaton, intoning with a rich apocalyptic weariness: "We can only hope there is compassion, understanding, even pity, inside the mind of the machine." The band were directing Berkoff to deliver the lines more slowly, and at each point Berkoff gathered himself for the performance, seemingly unaware of the function his speech would have in the music. At the end of the recording, they asked him for one more thing. Would he mind screaming "Shut Up!", which, they explained, came from *Beverly Hills Cop*? Berkoff became strangely self-conscious for someone who can ham with the best. He refused, saying he didn't want to cannibalise old stuff.

The actor-author had just flown in from Los Angeles where he is putting on his latest play, *Massage*. Its story concerns a woman, who, while working at a massage parlour, is introduced to a client who happens to be her husband. He is also bringing *Coriolanus* to Israel and Japan. Tanned, attired in leather jacket, baseball

cap and cowboy boots, he looked every inch a West Coast rocker.

Interviewing Berkoff is a bit like being attendance at one of his one-man shows. It is, in effect, a free-wheeling monologue. Occasionally you can grab the wheels and steer. His easy conversation was variously genial, jet-lagged, vain, articulate and, above all else, communicated an endearing insecurity, masked as narcissism. Such as his claim, for example, that he has replaced William Burroughs as an icon for certain rock groups.

What attracted him to the prospect of working with N-Trance? What kind of similarities are there between dance music and the sometimes brutal theatre of Steven Berkoff? Well, for a start, his productions are often purely physical theatre without props. Empty spaces where bodies clamber over each other, which, when you think about it, is a little like dubbing. But his opening gambit was simply that he is following the money. "You have to go wherever you can to pay the mortgage."

But he was also keen to stress a history of connections with musicians, from working with Roger Daltrey in *McVicar*, to meeting Bono in Dublin at one of his plays, to the possibility of working with Sting in the future. He is flattered by the interest that musicians have shown.

And he is clear about the relationship of rock and the kind of theatre he is interested in. "It's about an emotional, physical, psychological release and abandonment, which I think is the nature of drama. But most theatre doesn't really



Steven Berkoff, the thinking man's John Lydon: 'I'd like to tour a bit, become Number One'

Photo: Philip Meech

explore that any more. Drama is about the releasing of demons and devils out of the public psyche. The original Greek theatre was a bloody business. It was meant to be a sop, an amelioration to contend against death, violence, plague, wars. It harnesses our energies. To some extent, the only people who have replaced that primitive, vital, throbbing, dangerous theatre in the 20th century have been rock stars."

In this way, Berkoff is an enigma. He is a man who knows exactly what rock music should be about – so why is he considering working with Sting? His early theatre was punk in spirit and it comes as no surprise to hear him suggest that the sneering, Brechtian John Lydon was an early imitator. "He came to look at my style. I think he impersonated me a bit. He came to see *East* and the one-man show where I did *Dog*." (Lydon, of

course, would turn it around and brag that Berkoff copied him.) I asked him to define this style that so fascinates members of the rock world. "The candidness and the very frankness of the language I use, and its physical expression on stage. I sometimes have a little bit of disdain for what I regard as the sour arse of the establishment and rock 'n' roll has some kind of finger on the pulse of what energises people." His taste for it is selective, however: while he sees this project as a natural extension of what he does, unlike Irvine Welsh, you don't see him putting his face about in clubs.

N-Trance themselves are a deeply schizophrenic band. Aside from what they see as the promo music of "D.I.S.C.O.", which is basically pop junk, "Stayin' Alive" got the imprimatur of Pete Tong's "Record of the Week" long before it reversed the

relationship with their bank manager. I asked Berkoff whether he thought he might be a new pop sensation and whether he had considered touring. He turned the thought over, partly to see how it might sound and partly as a genuine fancy, of how the idea might play out. "I think I'm going to go out with my own rock 'n' roll group. Have a new career, write my own songs, have my own backing group. I'd like to tour a bit, become Number One. Using my language, putting it to music, so it becomes more coherent, more political, more emotive, creating a more powerful, more dissentious kind of language." When it comes to pop, Berkoff is a chancer. If he learns to swear a bit more in interviews, and be a bit more surly, he might even have a career.

"*The Mind of the Machine*" is reissued on All Around the World next month

Maternal tyranny

THEATRE Bailegangaire Royal Court, London

When the excellent Irish actress Rosaleen Linehan was last seen on the London stage, she was up to her waist in a mound of earth, jabbering away as Beckett's Winnie in *Happy Days*. In *Bailegangaire*, the first revival in a Tom Murphy season at the Royal Court, she's only marginally more mobile and every bit as redoubtable in the loquacity department. Propped up against the pillows, she plays Mommo, a bed-ridden, senile crone who spends her waking hours obsessively repeating a long involved story from her past about the day her husband challenged a hefty Bohemian man to a laughing contest and how, as the eventual result of this, the name of that town was changed to Bailegangaire, which means "the place without laughter".

Where Beckett's Winnie clings to speech as a way of staving off boredom and terror, Mommo's elaborate outpourings are a strategy of postponement and evasion. She never reaches the tragic end of the saga because she can't face it. Her long-winded tale and its inconclusiveness would drive a saint to distraction and, even at first hearing, run the risk of having much the same effect on the audience. Imagine, then, the frayed nerves of Mommo's

middle-aged granddaughter, Mary (Brid Brennan) who, in a situation remarkably like that in Martin McDonagh's later *Beauty Queen of Leenane*, is the lonely spinster carer of a tyrannically demanding hag. With the added insult, here, that she takes Mary for an interfering servant whose puzzling presence she resents and only deigns to recognise her less dutiful, sexually more adventurous married granddaughter, Dolly (Ruth McCabe).

While the old lady rabbits on, wrapped up in the past, the two younger women try to come to terms with their lives in the present. Mommo's story seems to take you back to a medieval pagan world (the contest turns into a kind of communal defiance of the gods as the peasant people shout out all the worst misfortunes they have endured and laugh uproariously: "Nothin' was sacred and nothing a secret. [Including] the unbaptised an' stillborn in shoe-boxes planted." Her granddaughters' experience puts us in touch with a mid-Eighties Ireland where, down the road from Mommo's traditional thatched cottage, there is a Japanese electronics plant which is none the less due to close, doubly symbolising the locals' lack of control over their destiny.

Mary's convinced that the past holds the clue to the

healing of the present and if Mommo can be steered into carrying her story through to the end, then a fresh start will be possible. But the catharsis of the close struck me as unearned and unconvincing and the intimations of renewal and rebirth out of all proportion to what had been finally exorcised. Before this dramatically under-justified moment, the control of mood and the acting in James Macdonald's production are superb. Brid Brennan's grave, sensitive, Mary shows you an intelligent woman near to the end of her tether and she and Ruth McCabe's blowsy, humorous, elicitly pregnant Dolly skilfully signal the edgy intimacy of these sisters as they get at each other by individually prompting their grandmother in to fresh cascades of narration.

Ms Linehan's performance is a *tour de force*, though not one that will be necessarily all that intelligible at first to English ears. Luxuriating in the preposterously literary diction of the tale and hawking up the various types of laugh from her prodigious vocal plumbing, she lets you hear a woman whose rapt, ravingly grandiloquent manner is a shelter from the meaning. To 17 May. Booking: 0171-565 5000

Paul Taylor

Soul confirming

MUSIC Miracles

Royal Albert Hall, London

When I was at school, anyone involved in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme was thought a bit of a nerd, but things change, it seems. On Thursday the Royal Albert Hall was packed for *Miracles: The Concert*, presented in association with the Award and, though there was smart and there was grungy, nerdy seemed thin on the ground. The Miracles Project is a west London community programme devised by the chamber orchestra London Music and its conductor Mark Stephenson, who is joint artistic director with Paul Gladstone Reid. Using funds supplied by the Duke's scheme, and local councils, the orchestra unites would-be musicians with professionals. This was

the unveiling of the results.

The opening section of the concert allowed groups from the boroughs involved to show off the work they'd produced. We had militaristic calisthenics and formation dancing, we had rappers and a little white rock, we even had highlights from *Bugsy Malone*, in costume. And everyone performed as if it were their only stab at fame. If it was more end-of-term talent contest than anything, what was surprising was that, despite claims of diversity, the results were so homogenised. I don't know the demographics of the boroughs involved but, on this

evidence, African, Asian and most Caribbean musics have been supplanted by soul music and its derivatives, nor was there the slightest trace of classical music (nor country music, come to that). What happened to pluralism and multi-culturalism?

The climax of the concert was *Miracles*, a new work by Paul Gladstone Reid, which he describes as "a contemporary mystery opera". The principle here was the same, that professionals perform alongside raw young talent. Reid provided

the music, a set of discrete songs linked in a rather shaky structure outlined by a narrator: "four symbolic figures from the subconscious and spiritual world" help seven "typical personalities" (The Sensationalist, The Optimist, The Cynic and so on) to find themselves and build a better world.

Well, nobody said opera had to make sense. Ask Wagner. On second thoughts, don't mention Wagner. The problem starts there, with ideas that "opera" is a superior form. That's why musicians in other genres are so eager to use the term. It's very 1970s to call your work an

"opera" when what you really mean is "concept album", and there was something rather 1970s about *Miracles*: glitter and sparkle, choreography out of Pan's People, pseudo-soul uplift. In some ways such projects nullify criticism. Think positive, and you're a wishy-washy liberal; be negative, and you're propagating rigid hierarchies. Perhaps all that's worth saying is that I hope everyone involved in *Miracles* goes on to enjoy the richness of contemporary musical life, if they don't already. What I fear is that, under the guise of self-expression, musical forms already bolstered by the muscle of multi-national dollars continue to lord it over the marginal, the dispossessed and the experimental.

Nick Kimberley

David Benedict WEEK IN REVIEW

overview

critical view

our view on view

THE DANCE

Hotel

A double-bill set in a hotel, libretto by Caryl Churchill, music by Orlando Gough and choreography by Ian Spink for dance-theatre company Second Stride. "Eight Rooms" superimposes separate couples over one night with 13 singers, piano duet and bass; "Two Nights" is a dance-led tale of mortality for two dancers and chorus.

Paul Taylor praised "Eight Rooms", "a densely-layered modern opera", but was slightly less sure of "Two Nights" although he pointed to its "strange, suggestive power". "The musical-verbal effect is much like one of Sondheim's more glibly cynical essays in people-watching. But repetition – always a key Second Stride device – starts to become more deeply lyrical and expressive," admired the FT. "As their voices mingle and soar, the triviality of their individual moments combine to become something tender and humane ... [Two Rooms] neither specific nor compelling enough," asserted *The Guardian*. "Eight Rooms" is more imaginative in its form than its content ... cool, casual jazz, rising to a crescendo when sex is on the agenda ... "Two Nights" is more elusive, poetic, striking and substantial," nodded *The Times*.

At The Place, London WC1 (0171-387 0031) tonight; Manchester Dancehouse (0161-237 9753) 2-3 May.

Second Stride more than live up to the overworked term "innovative" with Spink's surreal choreography of Gough's jazz-inflected setting of Churchill's strikingly allusive libretto.

THE FILM

Vertigo

A newly restored 70mm print of Hitchcock's 1958 film which was poorly received on its initial release due to the extraordinary device of revealing the plot to the audience halfway through. *Vertigo* suffers and former policeman James Stewart becomes obsessed with the woman he's tailing, Kim Novak.

Adam Mars-Jones hailed an "astonishingly influential film, and its themes of repetition and compulsive romanticism, its lush bleakness or bleak lushness". "One of the most extraordinary and nerve-jangling scores ever written ... Explores the dark side of men, the cruelty and manipulation that can lie behind the most loving male-female relationships," said the Mail. "No actor in the history of film has better conveyed the moral being ... One of the handful of finest movies ever made," gloried *The Telegraph*. "A film about illusion and delusion, stamped with Stewart's perplexed eyes and the trance-like stare of Novak, ice-cold but teasing, haunted and haunting," revelled *The Times*. "A dream-like quality to the film that Hitchcock never matched," marvelled *The Guardian*. "The greatest American love story of the last 50 years," announced the Standard.

128 mins, PG, at the Lumière, London WC2 (0171-836 0691)

A magnificent restoration of a masterpiece, a truly fascinating film about fear, control, guilt, transference, necrophilia ... all the things you miss in contemporary thrillers.

THE PLAY

Caucasian Chalk Circle

Simon McBurney directs and plays the dodgy Judge in one of Brecht's most famous plays with members of Theatre de Complicite and an international cast in the new Olivier-in-the-round at the National Theatre. Juliet Stevenson plays Grusha who saves a child and is forced to pay the consequences. Music by Gerard McBurney.

Paul Taylor enjoyed Complicite again creating "theatrical magic with the simplest of means ... Juliet Stevenson's staunch, moving Grusha ... Let's hope that in-the-round seasons become a permanent part of Richard Eyre's legacy." "I was transported ... has the magic of folk legend," applauded *The Times*. "A piece of epic storytelling ... it asks fundamental questions ... With this superbly democratic production, Complicite have staked their own claim to the transformed Olivier stage," saluted *The Guardian*. "McBurney's staging dissipates theatrical tension ... This major play has been diminished," growled the Standard. "Horrid coarseness ... the acting is almost all appalling," thundered the FT. "Boring, old Brecht ... it's absolute bliss when it stops," snorted *The Telegraph*.

In rep at the RNT, London SE1 (0171- 928 2252) until 18 June.

At 3½ hours it's a long evening but after the leaden prologue, a progressively rewarding one. The simplicity and directness of the storytelling and the beautiful choral singing is engrossing.

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مكتبة من الأصل

From the length of one of Bilbao's sober rectilinear boulevards you can glimpse the Guggenheim modern art museum, its vigorous metallic swoops and twists glinting and shuddering skywards in the pale northern light. The contrast, at first sight incongruous, could not be more fitting.

The American architect Frank Gehry's futuristic fantasy, plunked in the old warehouse area of Spain's principal industrial port, has already, even before its inauguration on 3 October, won the city's heart. Dour Basque citizens, who have little of the breezy gaiety of their southern compatriots, nod and smile approvingly as this fabulous building rampages over a vast stretch of riverside that they have scorned for decades.

Bilbao was a roaring city whose manufacturing heart – ironworks, refining, shipbuilding – was laid waste by recession and changing times. Even today, the spring air is spiked with a salty, sulphurous tang of old chemistry lab. Gehry wanted his building to honour the city's tough industrial past with shapes of chimneys and ships, of curved gleaming hulls reflected in the steep estuary waters.

The 14bn peseta (£70m) venture is the fruit of a deal between New York's Solomon Guggenheim Foundation and the Basque regional government, together with the provincial government of Viscaya. The Basque taxpayer financed the building and Guggenheim will supply the lion's share - 80 per cent - of the exhibits. They will be drawn, in rotating selection, from its museums in New York and Venice, home to the finest private collection of 20th-century art.

The Basque government adopted the project to help shake the city out of its doldrums and push it towards the next century. The same impulse produced Bilbao's stylish new metro system, Sir Norman Foster's cheerful and user-friendly homage to the beauty of concrete and steel.

The Guggenheim's director, Thomas Krens, promises Bilbao will be his foundation's flagship in Europe, a glittering star in a "constellation" of establishments from New York to Seoul. It has been controversial from the start, not just for the potentially tempestuous partnership of private American and public Basque funds.

But the building is an undisputed triumph – despite a worrying moment when the titanium plates that clothe the undulating walls started to discolour. Now it is the eventual content that causes rumbles of disquiet within Spain's picky art establishment.

The hottest dispute is whether the museum can borrow *Guernica*, Picasso's masterpiece on the horrors of war, from Madrid's Reina Sofia

No place like home: Picasso's 'Guernica'. 1937, top: the Guggenheim museum in Bilbao, under construction, wing to show the painting in its native land for the first time, above

Museum, for its inaugural exhibition. The painting was inspired by the Nazis' aerial bombardment 60 years ago today of the Basques' spiritual capital just down the road. It has never been exhibited in the Basque country.

The Reina Sofia thinks *Guernica*, battered by decades of toing and froing before it came to Spain in 1981, is now too fragile to move. The museum recently denied a request from Japan to borrow the painting for a commemoration of the bombing of Hiroshima, and refused an application from France to include it in a Picasso retrospective despite a personal petition from President Mitterrand to King Juan Carlos. Given the sensitivity of Bilbao's request, the Reina Sofia has now commissioned a report on the state of the canvas, and will announce its final decision next month.

"The 60th anniversary of the destruction of Guernica offers an unrepeatabe historic opportunity for Basque people to see this work, the most important painting in 20th-century art, in their own homeland for the first time," Juan Ignacio Vidarte,

managing director of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, said this week. "This transcends technical considerations. To say it is too fragile is to insult our intelligence. We've made plans to transport it in its frame in a special protective vehicle. It's not a problem of cost. We've said we'll pay."

The tug-of-war has become a battle of political will, probably to be resolved by a quiet word in the ear of the Prime Minister. Jose Maria Aznar, should he judge it prudent to bow to pressures from the region's ruling Basque Nationalist Party, who are also partners in his government in Madrid.

The importance of the painting goes beyond the artistic. Locals tell you that hanging a copy of *Guernica* on their sitting room wall during 40 years of Franco's rule amounted to an act of defiance.

Some whisper that sending *Guernica* away for up to two years would strip the Reina Sofía of the jewel in its otherwise undistinguished crown: hence its foot-dragging. Braced for possible dis-

appointment, Vidarte argues that the painting would be welcome any time, not just this year.

The problem, says Kosme María de Barandano, a university professor of 20th-century art who is close to both the Guggenheim and the Reina Sofia, is that the political appeal for the work from the Basque government and the artistic request from the museum have become intertwined, and the Reina Sofia now has to decide on criteria far beyond its usual museological considerations.

Barandano is more worried about new acquisitions, for which the Basques are contributing £30m over four years, set to form 20 per cent of the museum's collection. The first 23, bought in February, include works by De Kooning, Anselm Kiefer, Rothko and a number of young Basques. Vidarte says these works complement existing Guggenheim holdings.

Barandano regrets that the museum announced the purchases without showing them. "Rothko is one of the great painters of this century," he said.

this week in Bilbao. "But I'm more interested in the quality of the work than the resonance of the name. Rothkos vary greatly in price and quality: some are very damaged and discoloured. We don't want to end up with his duds."

He also questions the wisdom of acquiring works by Basque artists whose paintings are widely exhibited throughout the region. "They could have bought works of less well-known people. Especially as the Guggenheim has made no commitment to exhibit these works in New York, which would have been a generous gesture of international cultural exchange."

If Bilbao's museum is splendid from the outside, it is even more spectacular inside, prompting the thought that the vast curving galleries could outdazzle the works exhibited within them. Barandano says not: "A big work by Mondrian is not going to be frightened by grand surroundings."

The only doubt is whether the world's art-lovers will make the detour to Bilbao to see this new marvel.

"In *Guernica*, and in all my recent works of art, I clearly express my abhorrence of the military caste that has sunk Spain in an ocean of pain and death."

With these words, spoken at the installation of *Guernica* at the Paris World's Fair in July 1937, Pablo Picasso made public his support for the Republican cause and confirmed the political tenor of a painting that has become an icon of 20th-century art. Yet, in title apart, there is no obvious connection between Picasso's *Guernica* and the Nazi bombardment of the Basque capital 60 years ago today. It was the photo-journalists who recorded the horrors of that day: the twisted bodies of mothers and children strafed by the Luftwaffe were captured on film where they fell.

So what precisely does *Guernica* portray? The clues to its meaning are at best enigmatic: there is a speared horse in its death throes, an impassive bull, a howling woman cradling her dead child. A fallen soldier's sword in hand, lies, mouth agape, beneath the horse. An older, anguished woman holds out a lamp, while an astonished female witness gazes on the mayhem. Behind these women, and unseen by them, a plummeting figure bursts into flames.

The meaning of *Guernica* has intrigued art historians for decades, all the more so given *Guernica*'s notorious reticence about his work. Most interpreters regard *Guernica* as an anti-war protest expressed in open, universal terms. Spanish historians, for their part, maintain that *Guernica* has a concrete, if elusive, symbolism related to the Civil War, a view lent credence by Picasso's comments on joining the French Communist Party in October 1944, when he referred to *Guernica*'s deliberate sense of "propaganda" and remarked that, "the bull represents

From myth to mural: the Romans break down the walls of Numancia, only to find all its inhabitants already dead or dying (MARY EVANS); one of Picasso's earliest composition studies for 'Guernica' No 6 (1 May 1937), showing a helmeted warrior (SUCCESION PICAISO/DACS 1997); and the front page of L'Humanité that broke the story of the bombing on 28 April 1937

brutality, the horse the people". I would like to propose a new reading of *Guernica* that brings to light the lost allegory of the painting: the Siege of Numancia. This famous Spanish legend recounts how the people of Numancia, the sacred town of the Iberian Celts, committed mass suicide rather than surrender to the Roman general Scipio Aemilianus in 133 BC.

The example of Numancia stirred Spanish pride during the reign of Philip II and again during the Napoleonic invasion in 1809. The Republicans appropriated the legend as their own during the Civil War and, with Franco's Nationalist forces inexorably gaining ground, eventually saw the fate of Numancia as an analogy to their own hopeless situation. Republicans even began calling themselves "Numantinos".

In *Guernica* — created for display at the 1937 Paris World's Fair in a pavilion funded by the

Republican government as part of a desperate propaganda effort — Picasso enlarges on the legend, weaving into the story his own esoteric symbolism.

Picasso first accepted the commission in January 1937, six months into the war. The weeks that followed were a grim, uncertain time for him, and inspiration was slow in coming. In a poetic journal, he recorded the anguish he experienced as he searched in vain for a suitable subject for the mural, while the anxious organisers met him every night at the Café de Flore in the hope of some progress.

What finally galvanised Picasso into action was news of the bombing of Guernica on 26 April. True to himself and to the ideologically driven mood of the 1930s, he painted a work that reflected the morbid ambiguity of the time, as well as contemporary political and philosophical issues and their bearing on representation and the artist. He

those to work by way of allusion because the truths he wanted to convey would have been unacceptable to many hard-line Republicans. What he alluded to, but dared not overtly express, was the inevitable victory of fascism and the overthrow of humanist values, not only in Spain, but across all of Europe.

By the spring of 1937, democracy was widely believed to have failed, the French Popular Front had fallen apart, and there seemed to be no way forward for society. The bombing of Guernica on 26 April finally extinguished all hope of a positive outcome for the Republican movement and exile to Mexico or the Soviet Union was anxiously negotiated by government leaders.

Four days before the bombing, there had opened in Paris a French version of Cervantes' 1580 play, *The Siege of Numancia*. Picasso knew those involved with the production -

Include the director Jean-Louis Barrault, future star of *Les Enfants du Paradis*—and, whether or not he attended at performance, it seems more than coincidental that the programme for the play contained a reference to the Iberian town as a symbol of "the persistence of the spirit of freedom in a given place". If, when *La Numancia* opened on 22 April, Numancia could be seen as a beacon of hope for the Republican struggle, by 28 April, when the news of the destruction of Guernica broke on the front page of *L'Humanité*, it had turned into a symbol of the Republicans' heroic defeat.

In *Guernica*, on a canvas resembling a theatrical backdrop, Picasso alludes to the most dramatic moments in Cervantes' play, the scenes depicting the mass suicide of the Numancians.

As they prepare to die, the defiant townspeople set their own alight, determined to deprive

General Scipio of trophies to be made at his triumph in Rome. Meanwhile, despite their initial resolve, the women and children who are to die first, at the hands of their own soldiers, become hysterical when the fateful moment arrives, and some of the mothers try to escape with their children in their arms.

In Picasso's mural, a walled town goes up in flames, as fire leaps from a tower on the right-hand side; on the extreme left of the picture, we see a mother and child as innocent victims, killed, not by bombs, but by *swords* (an early sketch emphasises a sword protruding from the child's gaping wound); while, to the extreme right, Picasso makes reference to the final scene of Cervantes' play, in which a boy named Barriato, the keeper of the keys to the city and the last of its citizens to die, plunges to his death from a flaming rooftop (only Picasso portrays this figure as female).

Note, too, that in one of the earliest sketches, dated 1 May 1937, the trampled swordsman of the finished picture wears an ancient, Roman-style helmet. Picasso reinforces the idea of sacrifice through the centrality of the speared horse, part of a related allegory often referred to in his writings and etchings of the mid-1930s. In these works, a bull and a disembowelled horse signal the end both of classical representation and of humanism. The young female lamp-bearer, who resembles Picasso's lover Marie-Thérèse Walter, holds the torch of truth and classical values over a dark world. The erotically tinged symbolism of Picasso's personal sexual and creative allegorisation here caused dismay among certain Republican officials, some of whom attempted to have the mural replaced by a more suitable work, with a more positive tone.

After the dissolution of the

anti-fascist movement early in 1937, Picasso, like some of his avant-garde associates, followed a radical political and aesthetic agenda. A mythicised, primitive form of utopian community was projected: not a society of individuals, but a kind of leaderless socialist community in which all were equal. For Picasso, Numancia was the epitome of just such a community – a community in which the people are united through sacrifice – and it is this notion that he tried to symbolise in his *Guernica*.

Picasso's ambiguous and controversial response to the bombing of the Basque capital proved a disappointment to those Republicans who had looked to the artist for a clear directive. But he had clearly struggled over his commission, producing 45 sketches over a five-week period, and transforming the work through seven states. Photographs documenting the work's progress show that he had originally conceived a more leftist, Republican mural, before changing the central image of a raised fist clutching a sheaf of wheat and reaching up to the sun (the raised fist being, of course, the Republican salute) into the more baffling symbol of an electric arc lamp similar to the one in his own studio – a detail that shifts the picture's emphasis away from the political towards the private and esoteric. And, while the photo-journalists captured the victims of the bombing in black-and-white clarity, Picasso employed a more problematic grisaille.

So, despite his public proclamations and the picture's enduring fame as a symbol of anti-war protest, *Guernica* ultimately inhabits a greyer area — as a statement not simply about the impossibility of representing a human tragedy like the Nazi bombing of Guernica, but about the impossibility of representation itself.

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Book of spring fiction:
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The fall and rise of the
relative home
Adriana Wolff, sex and
married feminist

Photo Print



THE PLAY
Armenian Chalk
Circle

THE PLAY
Caucasian Chalk
Circle

The odd man at the zoo

What if chimps, rather than humans, had evolved into lords of creation? Patrick Gale savours a beastly satire

Great Apes by Will Self, Bloomsbury, £14.99

Rather than grant the press the usual proof copies, Bloomsbury has produced just 30 "bound manuscript" versions of Will Self's latest book, numbered and illegibly signed. This could be a piece of overweening vanity from so riskily style-conscious a novelist. After 50 or so pages, however, it emerges as a small piece of postmodern wit to prop up a weighty satire, one of whose targets is the contemporary art scene.

Challenging, Tate-hung painter Simon Dykes wakes from a drug-fuelled night on the tiles to find his world is not what it was. His inamorata has become a shrieking, violent chimpanzee, her smelly retriever a miniature pony. As he is carted off to heavy sedation and a secure room in Charing Cross Hospital, we gather that this is no narcotic hangover but a complete rewrite of evolution. Of the great

Humanity becomes chimpunity, inhuman, inchimp. We glimpse a TV encounter between Anton Mosichimp and Loyd Grosschimp. Chat shows become gesture shows, to doorstep becomes to doorknuckle, and silence, the etymologically dubious signle

apes, chimps, not humans, have proved the success story. Horses have been bred ever smaller to produce pets which usefully fertilise the garden, and dogs scaled up into beasts of burden and sporting transport.

These details aside, history has progressed exactly as we know it. Saatchi, Rwanda and all. Cars have far more gears and are steered with feet as well as hands. Buildings are slightly smaller and studded with hand-holds. Households are run as hierarchical, incestuous tribes in which a female in oestrus, however young, can expect to be mated by father, brothers and any strangers who catch her fancy.

Dykes comes into the care of Zach Busner, an Oliver Sacks figure who, spotting a career opportunity but truly fascinated, leads Simon out of hospital and into the shaggy bosom of his own Hampstead household. Simon comes to understand that his feeling that he is human is a delusion caused by brain damage. He grows to accept that he is a chimp and to flourish in chimp society. Doctor and patient

become friends and embark on a spiritual and intellectual quest that leads them to the dark heart of anthropology.

Exploiting an ape's near-human qualities for satire is nothing new. *Max, Mon Amour* and *His Monkey Wife* spring to mind, as does Peacock's *Melincourt*, where an orang-utan is educated, taught the flute, found a baronetcy and a seat in Parliament. Self renders an entire chimpanzee civilisation, however, and with far more glee and invention than was mustered by the only other attempt, the humourless *Planet of the Apes* films.

There is always a danger, of course, of *Great Apes* becoming a one-joke exercise. Certain gags – like the ritual kissing of rear ends and cradling of testicles – are

flogged to death. Self is a word-relisher and has clearly enjoyed setting his word-processor program to hunt down and convert any word smacking of human rather than chimp culture. Humanity becomes chimpunity, inhuman, inchimp. We glimpse a TV encounter between Anton Mosichimp and Loyd Grosschimp. Chat shows become gesture shows, to doorstep becomes to doorknuckle, and silence, the etymologically dubious signle

Self's satirical premise works most vigorously on a sexual and scatological level. Child abuse is redefined as neglecting to mount one's pubescent daughters on a regular basis, monogamy is a worrying sign of social immaturity, and Oxford dons relish decanters of lovingly matured shit. Here, his looking-glass world causes the reader to reappraise the real one. The chimp ritual whereby an inferior animal must kowtow to a senior and where insolence is punished with a burst of violence followed by a loving grooming session is portrayed so as to emphasise the parallels with the stress and sycophancy of our own "pecking order".

In time the image of a chimpanzee London, in which humans are an endangered species laughed at in zoos, becomes too familiar to be merely funny. Self leads one to look beyond the surface grotesquerie to assess the chimp ways – of raising children, of cherishing hierarchy, of cultivat-

ing an extended family group – and to consider whether they offer any improvement on the human equivalents. There is a Swiftian energy to Self's scatological but Swift would surely not have chickened out, as Self does, from an appearance by the chimpanzee House of Windsor. And Swift's Gulliver is an observer whose emotional life is not an issue; Self's hero has a messy emotional life which his novel fails satisfactorily to resolve.

Like *Brave New World*, another satire in which a primitive is educated in the new ways of a society which

But, unlike genre fiction, where circumstantial plot is all and characterisation an optional extra, character is at the very centre of *The Way I Found Her*. It is character and its consequences, rather than circumstance, which fuels its action. The strange events the book recounts are seen through the eyes of Lewis, and its success depends upon Rose Tremain's convincing us that here is a real, living, breathing 13-year-old boy – no easy feat, especially if you're a woman and teenage is some way behind you. She takes even more risks by using Alain-Fournier's classic *Le Grand Meaulais*, also narrated by an adolescent boy (and written by a young man) as a continuous motif. That *The Way I Found Her* survives even this hubristic comparison is an indication of her achievement.

Nevertheless, I was not immediately convinced. "I think," says Lewis, "I'll start with the moment when I noticed my mother had become a beautiful woman." Do 13-year-old boys, immersed in the solipsism of adolescence, notice this kind of thing about parents? But Alice's beauty is essential to the plot, so Lewis has to notice it; and one of the book's themes is his awakening from childhood into the adult reality of sensual love, in which people do notice such things.

The complication of adolescence, of course, is that you are not yet adult though you may sometimes seem so. Children experience the world differently to adults. This – the different ways in which the same events may be viewed – is the pivot upon which the book turns. Lewis, intent on his own voyage of discovery and following his inexorable boy's logic, thinks he alone can explain

himself a Utopia, *Great Apes* expends so much energy on the details of a social system that its emotional narrative comes to seem secondary to its one big idea. If the novel peters out just when it should deliver a punchy climax – as Dykes goes in search of his missing human "son" in the African bush – it is perhaps because the artist's restitution as well-adjusted chimp has been too successful. His hopes and values are no longer ours.

Little and large

Ruth Brandon acclaims a child's-eye view of adult tragedy

The Way I Found Her by Rose Tremain, Sinclair-Stevenson, £15.99

For story-gobblers like me, the recent return of plot to the British literary novel is a welcome development. It's all very well trying to do the Turgenev, Joyce or Nabokov thing if you're Turgenev, Joyce or Nabokov, but most are not. In the absence of towering genius, plot can help a lot.

Rose Tremain's latest novel, *The Way I Found Her*, has an excellent plot. It is (at least on one level) a mystery story. Thirteen-year-old Lewis Little goes to Paris with his mother, Alice. They are to stay with the popular novelist Valentina Gavrilovich, whose works Alice translates, in Valentina's opulent establishment near the Parc Monceau. Valentina disappears; Lewis, who has fallen in love with her, determines to find her, and succeeds. Lewis's father, Hugh, does not accompany them. He proposes to build Alice a summer-house while they are away. Lewis refers to this as his "toilet": it starkly contrasts the humdrum Devon of marriage and family life with exotic Paris. The stay in Paris fatally changes all the premises upon which the summer-house was founded.

This novel succeeds on many levels, and one of the reasons is the plot, which grips like the excellent mystery it is. But, unlike genre fiction, where circumstantial plot is all and characterisation an optional extra, character is at the very centre of *The Way I Found Her*. It is character and its consequences, rather than circumstance, which fuels its action.

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Lewis, intent on his own voyage of discovery and following his inexorable boy's logic, thinks he alone can explain Valentina's disappearance. He uses his own passions – for chess, computers, the books he is reading, and above all for Valentina herself – to guide him

Valentina's disappearance. He uses his own passions – for chess, computers, the books he is reading, and above all for Valentina herself – to guide him. But the adults are following a different logic, a different trail. They see what he sees, but draw different conclusions. Tremain shows us how both logics, both conclusions, are valid. They are not, however, compatible; and it is this incompatibility which will lead, eventually, to tragedy. Tremain has managed to avoid the false naivety and awful archness that are one of the great dangers of writing as a child. Her evocation of Paris and Valentina through Lewis's eyes is wonderful, his changing relationship with Alice wholly convincing, the fantasy-life he builds around Valentina delicately and erotically done. Lewis himself becomes more engaging as we know him better. He is unusually bright and self-possessed – his command of French is, to say the least, unusual in a hitherto monoglot 13-year-old – but the reader becomes immersed in the inexorable adolescent logic of his world. He is a formidable creation.

The Way I Found Her begins joyously, but the end is tragic, inescapably black as only adolescence can be. It's oddly affecting. Will Lewis ever recover from his awful loss? There's no way of knowing. But we really care.

Human, all too human

Louise Doughty yearns for a little less naked truth

Ten Men by Elisa Segrave, Faber, £10.99

Creative writing tutors spend much time explaining that a fictional work must have a form – autobiographical reportage is not enough. Elisa Segrave's *Ten Men* is a frank and funny account of her battle with breast cancer. Her less recent reminiscences are now published as fiction. *Ten Men* is amusing, quirky and well written in places, but emphatically not a novel. Nor do the subdivided sections have the internal coherence of short stories.

Her material, a series of anecdotes, has been cleverly herded into chapters entitled variously "My Father" or "Martin" or "David Again". But the protagonist is always the female narrator, a young woman with a wry sense of observation but a curious inability to look at herself. The narrator's father emerges as a vivid eccentric, a former naval attaché happy to explain the facts of life to his young daughter over breakfast, much to the chagrin of the alcoholic Catholic cook. The physical aspects of life are never far away. "Another detail about his dead mother which seemed to preoccupy my father was that she had one sponge for her bottom and one for the rest of her body. Why did he find this so irritating and why did he mention it so often?" This works well, but the childlike tone continues. Initially cute and engaging, it starts to irritate when the narrator is a grown woman.

Some chapters work better than others. In "Martin", the narrator demonstrates her surprising capacity to fall in love with unlikely objects. Martin has "a pink face and floppy brown hair ... he was overweight and perspired". She travels around America on Greyhound buses with him and falls hook, line and sinker. Segrave makes this entirely plausible. Like many of the men, Martin is not so much described as glimpsed. A full picture never emerges, but he seems as real and unknowable as a man you might pass in a supermarket.

The self-deprecation implicit in these unlikely but convincing affairs is undermined by the narrator's odd avoidance of self-analysis. We discover that her wealthy grandmother has bought her a house in Hackney and is asked to sympathise with what a pain it is looking after your own house when you are only 21. Most of the men are irritated by the fact that the narrator doesn't need to work and can afford to swan off to Paris at the drop of a hat. It is an irritation the reader shares. The implication is that it is all leading up to a catharsis, but even the father's death does not prove a turning point.

If this were a memoir, it might be acceptable that it doesn't lead anywhere. When it is packaged as fiction, one is left with a feeling of: So what? Segrave can certainly write, but a series of vignettes, however entertaining, do not a novel make.

ALBERTO MANGUEL

A History of Reading

A delightfully wide-ranging, beguiling study of a small daily miracle
PAUL BAILEY, *Daily Telegraph*



Infoporridge and boffin waffle

Independent choice: techno-thrillers by Mat Coward

Techno-thrillers used to be about big men struggling with big technologies: vast, dangerous machines, like space rockets and nuclear power stations. Today, all we're left with is software. The dangers are mostly digital and the men don't need to be big, since all they do for 500 pages is sit in front of a blinking cursor, drinking coffee. Computers employ a technology most of us use, but don't understand. That presents computhrillers with a generic problem. Floppies, hard drives, modems: these things aren't just humdrum, but ho-hum-drum.

There are two principal ways of writing novels full of such specialist jargon. One is to explain everything, and thus risk boring the reader; the other is not to explain everything – and thus risk boring the reader. Business journalist Matthew Lynn, in his debut *Insecurity* (Heinemann, £10), has decided to do both. So we get long passages of infoporridge and boffin waffle, half-heartedly disguised as dialogue, at the end of which uneducated home keyboarders like me still have no idea what anybody's talking about.

Jack is Special Assistant to the chairman of Kizog. With a name like that, it has to be (and indeed is) a corrupt pharmaceutical giant. Jack's co-hero, Tara, is beautiful, oriental and a researcher into human viruses. When they discover Kizog's evil-doing, they run away and hole up in a hotel with a few grand's worth of hacking equipment purchased on Tottenham Court Road. They emerge with their hacked proof (the regular Maitreese Falcon of computhrillers) for a final race-against-time scene, set mostly in a committee room at the Bank of England.

Lynn's publishers believe this book "brings the tension and tradition of John Buchan hurtling into the Nineties". While the set-up is tedious, its unravelling is quite exciting in an off-the-peg sort of way. John McLaren's *Press Send* (Simon & Schuster, £10.99) is also a lively enough caper. A "systems inventor" dying of cancer uses his last months to perfect a break-

through in artificial intelligence. By downloading himself into his creation, he effects a posthumous electronic revenge on everyone who ever thumped him or ripped him off. Unfortunately, the first half consists of a bitty satire on the values of 1990s San Francisco, set in the wacky world of venture capitalism.

Told almost entirely in unattributed dialogue, *Press Send* – which has already made its British author a dollar millionaire – contains a few very good jokes and some ancient SF ideas. An ever-present risk of cross-genre writing is that what seems ground-breaking new to one school will, to another, reek of Bakelite. McLaren's press release claims that "in a computer world, nothing is impossible". Well, there's your problem. If nothing's impossible, then there's nothing left to write about. Meanwhile, McLaren and Lynn both suffer from the undeniable fact that if there is one thing more boring than computers, it is business. Only the solipsists who named a minor City reform "Big Bang" could possibly think otherwise.

Computers can occasionally be interesting, but they can never be exciting. Duane Franklet, computer trouble-shooter and author of *Bad Memory* (Gollancz, £16.99), seems to acknowledge this with his office-bound settings, low-key characters and convincingly toneless dialogue. True, there are a few murders in this very readable story of a Fortune 500 computer company held to ransom by a brilliant saboteur, but one gets the feeling that they are there largely for appearances sake. Franklet's real themes are office politics and commerce's dangerous dependence on information technology. He does hint at something more apocalyptic, but pretty much forgets it. Just as well, since his deadpan "Dilbert in Peril" approach is his book's greatest strength.

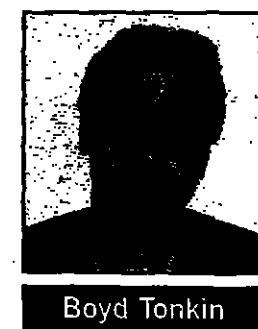
Greg Iles's *Mortal Fear* (Hodder & Stoughton, £17.99) is by a long way the best written and most satisfying of these books. It's also a phoney. It pretends to be a computhriller, about a serial killer



Pick of the week
Mortal Fear by Greg Iles

who picks his female victims from among the subscribers to Eros, an on-line erotica forum. But actually it's a Southern morality tale of guilt and redemption, a form as thoroughly traditional and long-debugged as an abacus.

Iles, writing mostly in the present tense, uses the self-consciously literary, Greek-tragedy style often found in Deep South crime fiction. Here, acts of innocent foolishness or human weakness have terrible, disproportionate consequences. Family secrets rot and stink; sins are punished by an irrational, Old Testament version of Fate. Real Mississippi men, even those who ride mice instead of pick-ups, must eviscerate their inner demons before they can hope to win an Elf (face-to-face) confrontation with sex, marriage, or psycho-killers. To do the right thing is to live; to live with cowardice is to die. Morality may be relative, but reality is never virtual. *Mortal Fear* is a fine piece of writing and a tremendous thriller. In it, technology knows its place – as fiction's servant, never its master.



Boyd Tonkin

A week in books

Commonwealth or scheming Curia – burns more brightly. "Commonwealth literature", of course, means precious little in itself. To academics, it's just a quaint fur-trimmed euphemism for the post-colonial writing that began to flourish as the Union Flag came down. To publishers, it's no more than the English-language market shorn of the States. Yet the richness of the thing makes up for the vagueness of the term. Recent winners of the main award have included Vikram Seth, David Malouf, Louis de Bernières and Rohinton Mistry. That's arguably a stronger record than the Booker itself. (And the victors get an audience with the Queen rather than a going-over by *Late Review*.) On Tuesday, expect a close contest between *Salt* by Earl Lovelace from Trinidad (winner of the "Caribbean and Canada" heat) and the ubiquitous Beryl Bainbridge, who bats for Liverpool and the scary-sounding "Eurasia" with *Every Man for Himself*.

Alastair Niven and Michael Schmidt point out in their tasty new selection of Commonwealth writing, *Enigmas and Arrivals* (Corgi, £9.95), that much of the best work under their broad rubric tells "a story of migration and re-settlement". As it happens, that story fits much of the planet's population. There are even rumours it might apply to many drivers of mid-range family saloons in marginal seats. But (by Jingo) don't tell that to the spin-doctors.

books: spring fiction

In search of lost time

Neil Bartlett is overwhelmed by an elegy for the New York generation lost to Aids

The Farewell Symphony by Edmund White, Chatto, £16.99

It is just me, or is anyone else tired of being told what books mean? These days, blurbs don't just want to sell you the book; they want to save you the bother of reading it. The advance word on Edmund White's new novel is that here is the book the public has been waiting for ever since *A Boy's Own Story* crossed over into WH Smith and made contemporary gay fiction a potential source of real profit.

The back cover can't quite bring itself to say "last will and testament," or to imply that Aids can now be safely relegated to the past, but the implications are clear. Here is the Aids novel, with plenty of kinky sex, enough redeeming literary kudos to keep Smith's happy, and the incalculable marketing plus of an author who can be portrayed as a dying generation's last representative. Such a profile of White's book is as baffling as it is inaccurate, as cheap as he is classy.

Not that *The Farewell Symphony* isn't autobiographical. It is, but in a very specific way. White gives us his life in the same way that Proust gives us his Marcel's, from the 1950s to 1995, from Christopher Street to Père Lachaise. Variations on three main themes – writing (or rather, getting published), gay culture and Aids – reveal how the gaining of wisdom and success is plotted against the loss of, literally, everyone. These days, Aids is conventionally used as the logical, or theological, conclusion to a nastily neat version of gay history: repression erupts into liberation which corrupts into hedonism and results in damnation. In pre-gay narratives, damnation is simply replaced with the catharsis of the deathbed.

Not for White. Where others, from the devious of Tory propaganda to contrivers of tear-stained finales in *Angels in America* or *My Night with Reg* – have found a potent metaphor, White has sensed only a disruption of all meaning. As the disease changes shape, from the Grim Reaper incarnate to a prosaic long-term condition, it looks like he is right. What could be less capable of being tamed by narrative than the lack of an ending?

The title suggests that he is proposing a grand metaphor of his own. The Aids generation of the New York of the 1970s and 1980s are to be recast as the performers of Haydn's famously elegaic symphony, leaving the stage one by one until only the last violinist remains. On the surface, this narrator is no first violin; he's a mess. Sleeping his way through Manhattan, he fails to find an Esterhazy; he can't get his stuff published. He falls in love with the wrong guys; he never gets laid enough.



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The whole rambling narrative of memory is strung between two brief mentions of the dead lover whose absence is the book's true subject. One, on the second page, describes White stumbling with grief at his funeral; the second, on the penultimate page, merely sketches the circumstances of his death. Both end with the author lapsing into appalled silence. These silences, coming precisely where novels with less nerve deliver their big set pieces and big morals, are suddenly and unexpectedly frightening. I read White with and for pleasure; these pages had me first terrified and then howling with grief.

The bracketing of a plotless, time-haunted narrative between a sudden opening and a thematic reprise isn't all that White has reworked from Proust, who was paradoxically liberated to write

the unwriteable by the death of a great love. Something similar seems to have happened to White: the novel is written without fear. History is left to take care of its own epic self while the author is driven by snobbery, ambition and lust.

An absolute need to ingratiate (Proust may have been a Jewish queen, but White comes from Ohio) covers an absolute solitariness. For Marcel's Proust, read White's Manhattan; their aristocracies are both beautiful, both gone for ever, and both of their chroniclers are ambushed by self-hatred.

Not for White the easy pieties of assimilation; he is unafraid of admitting how bewilderingly damaged most gay men feel most of the time. The main formal difference is that White's catalogue of anecdotes is shorter, more calculatedly deranged and salacious than Marcel's. This is time condensed by drugs rather than expanded by insomnia. His courtships take only minutes; he can dress for a ball in jeans and T-shirt. His Oedipal quest for Kevin, his Swann is called Joshua; his versions of Jupien, Charlus and Saint-Loop are legion, and in the good cause of *recherche* he includes himself in their fornications. Happily, White hasn't "come to terms" with homosexuality, and so is still finding new terms to describe it. His couplings lurch from the gorgeous to the pointless and his prose is sordid, technical and ecstatic – like sex.

The Glasgow Citizens' Theatre once famously translated Proust's text as "A Waste of Time". White's narrator refers to his own chronicle as "an archaeology of gossip". Two-thirds of the way into the book, this reader found himself trapped in a featureless desert of semi-fictionalised detail – names dropped, cocks engulfed – as exhausting and infuriating as any of Marcel's meditations on Romanesque iconography. But then, as with Proust, comes the pay-off: the bracketing of all this waste with the simple fact that the narrator continues to live and write, knowing that no first-person narrative can climax with the hero's death.

Here, at the very last minute, when Time is regained, White refuses to console or explain. It would have been so easy to close the story with a redeeming true love that would put the long journey through the waste land of promiscuity in perspective. The fact is that White is writing for no one but himself. His art is a dark one, and you can take it or leave it.

His chosen title is a gift for sentimentalists. They would love it if he could complete his own analogy with Proust and, having written his concluding pages, die. I should just point out that some HIV-positive people don't, these days. Lacking such an obvious alibi as victimhood, this is writing which is as hard to recommend as, say, Pina Bausch's dancing. All I can honestly say is that I love it, this gutter mandarin – obscene, capricious, heart-broken, furious, vain, fiercely moral – and that this is the book that finally allowed me to weep for all I've had to watch happen these past few years.

White has written a life against death; he has pitched the small sound of writing against the big noise of absolute silence. If the book has a point, it is shockingly simple: this man you thought was the last violinist, playing a tune written for him by history, turns out to be the composer.

The sensitive plant

Frederic Raphael eavesdrops on a hero who hovers between fiction and gossip

The Unouchable by John Banville, Picador, £15.99

Quite as if they were Gilbert and Sullivan, or Fortnum and Mason, the double act of Burgess and Maclean, who defected more than 40 years ago, retains a certain folkloric place in the history of England. They were technically traitors but they were our traitors, principled and self-tormented in the (dull) case of Maclean; campy, Quixotic, larky with the thick-lipped, irresistible (to some) Burgess. If we now know that Marxism-Leninism was a sell and the Soviet Union a gangster state, those who were infatuated with Uncle Joe remain slightly immune from censure; after all, Russia was on our side against Hitler.

As for B and M, there is something almost patriotic in the duo's capacity both to be totally puffed and to deceive the British Special Branch, and to bring off a John Buchanish bunk to Moscow. Alan Bennett's *An Englishman Abroad* has already turned the exiled Burgess into a figure of puffy, pouty pathos. No one, however, has made the unenthusiastically notorious Maclean curer than a solemn dupe. Cuckolded in Moscow by Graham Greene's chum, Kim Philby, he is a stick of celery that gets no reheating. On the other hand, ex-Sir Anthony Blunt has also been rehabilitated by Bennett, in John Schlesinger's *A Question of Attribution*, as a palatial pal of Her Majesty Frunella Scales.

Now John Banville has taken up Blunt and his whole Oxbridge galère and mythologised them. He makes Blunt as the Ulsterman Victor Maskell, scholarly scion of a family of "Protestant" Irish turncoats. Victor is the son of a bishop whose fat second wife, Hattie, is one of the minor charms and true inventions of a well-populated saga.

Since duplicity is the theme of this artful composition, Victor both is and is not Blunt. If he is camouflaged with a fictional half-Jewish wife and two children, one of whom he has actually fathered, Maskell echoes Blunt undisguisedly in being the leading authority on Poussin, keeper of the royal pictures and head of an Institute which is a dead finger for the Courtlaugh. He is acutely and convincingly analysed as a cold fish sometimes urgently on heat.

Victor's juvenile crush on his eventual brother-in-law, Nick Brevoort, leads him into one of those unlovely cross-dressed marriages of inconvenience, with Nick's sister, Vivienne, who is first "loved" by the juvenile traitor when he is not yet consciously homosexual and she is in drag. The hoydenish Bright Young Thing becomes a sadder Old Thing, but remains faithfully unfaithful, like some updated Guinevere. Her affair with Querrall, the devious, devilish Catholic novelist (whose name derives, cleverly and too obviously, from Greene's *Querry* in *A Burnt-Out Case*), parallels the adultery of another Viv, T S Eliot's wife, with Bertrand Russell. Bertie himself does not even get a walk-on part in a show stuffed with apostate apostles. Of Eliot himself, the narrator shrewdly remarks, "I recognised at once in that shadowed, camel-eyed and timorous voice the marks of the life-long, obsessive dissembler." Such asides are proof of Banville's intelligence, always sharper than his imaginative powers.

Saddled between Greene's thriller-peak and Lawrence Durrell's flourishes, the narrative veers from mundane confession to poetic loftiness. There is plenty of sex (mostly queer and fastidiously dwelt upon) and well-observed weather. I preferred the pretentiousness ("the ashy waffle" of a gas fire) to the terseness ("Nick turned too and vaguely peered"), but the unevenness of writing scarcely damages its ravellid readability. The rancid elegance of a decadent upper crust whose scruples have withered sooner than its power is gleefully conveyed.

The *Unouchable* unapologetically straddles the crossing point between fiction and gossip. It veers between the palace (where George VI is implausibly loquacious) and the louche clubs of Soho. The messier aspects of pre-Wolfenden London are compellingly conveyed. Maskell pronounces a touching elegy for the 1950s, when danger added zest to the smarter public lavatories. If Maskell is genuinely inhabited by his author, "Boy" Bannister (the Guy Burgess look-and-smell-alike) always depends for his tarnished halo on our knowing who he really is.

Art and artfulness are whisked appetisingly together in Maskell's lifelong obsession with Poussin. The symbolism of the master's painting of *The Death of Seneca* – is it or isn't it a fake, or a plant, or both? – is smoothly creamed in. An early reference to a patch of blue sky "in the shape of a bird in flight which is the true clandestine centre-point" in another painting, and its final use when Maskell is waiting for death, or suicide, is but the subtlest evidence of the author's shaping skills.

Unlike Aldous Huxley's *Point Counter Point*, the classic inter-war roman à clef, *The Unouchable* gives one the feeling that many of the characters have been pressed between the pages, like old flowers, rather than re-vitalised for them. I take it that the sustained, jeering anti-Semitism of the novel, in which Jews of various kinds and sizes have unsavoury roles, is intended as part of the period flavour, unless it's just Irish. The resultant stew is always spicy and sometimes delicious, but the chef, for all his lavishness, can justly be accused of having opened a tin too many.



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Unsheathing the blade

Marcelle d'Argy Smith appreciates a change of pace

The Web of Belonging by Stevie Davies, The Women's Press, £6.99

The trouble with reading Stevie Davies's latest novel is that the woman writes so beautifully, you find yourself reading very slowly. "Come on, love," says the heroine Jess as you open the book, "let's saunter. When did we last amble? We're always on the gallop – especially you poor love." And even though she's talking to her husband – handsome, solid and dependable Jacob, to whom she's been happily married for 20 years – it might well be an exhortation to the reader.

And so you, too, stop galloping. You find yourself sinking into a chair or maybe even going to bed unusually early to abandon yourself to a world in peaceful Shropshire where Jess, a pillar of the community, lives in the house where she was born, together with Jacob's mother May, his aunt Brenda and uncle Nathan. They came to stay after "the golden interlude" when she and Jacob had fostered a much-loved child. With selfless dedication and quiet religious conviction, she's given up her job as a librarian to care for the oldies.

Fortysomething woman in denial and masochist supreme, Jess insists she's enjoyed "a more fulfilled life" than anyone she'd ever known. Too good to be true and as fascinating as a rainy Sabbath? Well, Jacob thinks so. Tired of sharing his life with a childless, sexless saint and demanding relatives whom Jess calls "sweetheart, darling and love", he swoons on page five.

Slowly and inexorably, Jess's life starts to fall apart. She now has to question the entire foundations on which her life has been built, to ponder the question:

"Higgamus hoggamus, woman's monogamous, hoggamus higgamus, man is polygamous" – and to cope with the younger woman in Jacob's life. She realises, among other things, that she is "a blade, sheathed". It's hard to build a new life while still tending to a manipulative, spectacularly selfish chatterbox mother-in-law who once punched a health visitor on the jaw because she didn't like her face; or while fretting about dignified Nathan who thinks he should go into a home. And catering to frail, nervous Brenda, who spends even longer in the lavatory than May. There are good friends, even a man who shows interest, and Jess isn't the type to crack or walk away from those she cares for. Or is she?

Stevie Davies reveals all in a novel which is tender, perceptive, almost painful in its honesty and hilariously funny. Its characters are so marvellously drawn that you want more, more, more. I started to re-read this book the moment I'd finished it. There are good writers, there are very good writers. And there is Stevie Davies, who is in a class of her own.

Before the deluge

Penelope Lively enjoys a journey through the foreign country of the past

Gaglow by Esther Freud, Hamish Hamilton, £16.99

In her first novel, *Hideous Kinky*, Esther Freud pulled off that challenging feat of presenting a child's-eye view. It is a lovely book, precise and unselfish, charting a childhood that the reader identifies as bizarre and disturbing entirely through the accepting and judgmental perception of the child.

Gaglow again displays Freud's talent for evoking the climate of time and place by means of an admirably simple, direct style. She is not one of those writers who use ten words where one would do – her effects depend on a knack of clean, spare description and brief, uncomplicated dialogue. In this book she has given herself the extra challenge of nipping from one time and place to another, as the focus shifts from Sarah, today, to the Belgard family back in Germany at the time of the 1914-18 war.

The Belgards were Sarah's ancestors. Eva, the youngest of the three sisters who form the pivot of the alternative story, was her grandmother, whom she met at 18 when casually taken to visit by her painter father. Sarah is one of his three daughters by different mothers, treated with affectionate detachment and roped in as models as often as they will comply. Through her father's throwaway references to the background of his childhood and this lost country estate, Sarah becomes so interested in their mysterious ancestry that when *Gaglow* suddenly becomes a reality – recovered for the family in the restitution of property to the former East Germany after 1989 – she develops an obsession to visit the place before it is sold.

These flights from one ambience to the other are very effective, with Sarah's narrative serving as a kind of tether to the impressionistic method of the Belgard family sequences. Seen through the eyes of Eva, they again invoke that child's vision which combines observation with incomprehension.

A whole lifestyle is evoked with great economy. There are no ponderous descriptions but somehow the ambience lifts effortlessly from the focused prose. The prosperous Jewish family's fortunes fade as the war proceeds, until the end finds them almost destitute. Internal

tensions arise between the girls and the mother they have decided to despise and ignore in favour of their adored governess, Fraulein Schulze.

Emmanuel, the cherished son and brother, will be swallowed by the war and return to a different world. The gradual release of information about what exactly happened flickers cleverly between past and present narratives, until at the end everything comes together in a final denouement.

There is also the matter of Sarah herself, who gives birth to the child of a man who dumped her when she announced her pregnancy. The baby gets incorporated into his grandfather's painting, *faute de mieux*, but also nicely reflects that compelling physical unity of a mother and a new baby. The child brings out the best in Esther Freud's simple, accurate language: "the rounded eyelids, pale purple, and the eyebrows a tiny sketch of gold." Sarah's intensity of feeling about him is also evoked with minimal fuss, as is her ambivalent response to her former boyfriend. He fits in and out of the story with catastrophic effect on this reader, who was yelling "Don't do it!" from the side-lines as Sarah's resolve falters and she seems dangerously inclined to take the wretch back.

This brief novel leaves one with the impression of having read a book three times the length. Subsidiary characters – Sarah's two sisters, the Belgards' servants and neighbours – have a presence and flavour beyond their walk-on roles. Equally, so much is packed into the fragmented story of their life before and during the war that there seems to have been a leisurely narrative flow rather than a series of sharp vignettes.

To bring this off is a considerable achievement, the only risk being a lack of underpinning – crucially, perhaps, in the infatuation of Emmanuel for Fraulein Schulze, a strange and eventually malign figure whose disappearance devastates the three girls until the final revelation. "An enormous woman with red hair and great feet like a man," her charismatic power with the children comes across, but not the source of Emmanuel's passion. But this is the only significant weakness: here is an accomplished novel by a highly talented writer.



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Observer

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Ancestral piles

Piers Brendon meets the hard-up nobility who sought salvation in the tourist trade

The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home by Peter Mandler, Yale University Press, £19.95

In 1871 a fire damaged Warwick Castle, ruining many private apartments. The castle had long been popular with visitors, who apparently paid one housekeeper £30,000 in tips. So a restoration appeal was launched, without reference to the 4th Earl of Warwick in order to protect his "sensitive honour". Radicals attacked the fund but supporters argued it would restore part of the national heritage. Ruskin himself, though a champion of castles, found the subscription disgusting at a time of widespread destitution: "If a noble family cannot rebuild their own castle, in God's name let them live in the nearest ditch till they can."

Nevertheless, £9,000 was raised, the castle was repaired and visitors were soon guided round "the all that was destroyed by fire; hancuskin vawws...". A few years later, the Earl imposed a charge of a shilling for entry, anticipating later stately home entrepreneurs. So, like Windsor Castle, Warwick was private property while it was standing but belonged to the nation when it burned down. Its true status was unequivocally demonstrated in 1978 when the eighth Earl sold it to Madame Tussaud's.

This vignette illustrates many of the themes explored in Peter Mandler's splendid scholarly survey of the fortunes of the stately homes of England over the past 200 years. The book explodes the pervasive myth that country houses are unchanging Arcadian monuments, cherished by owners and venerated by a populace who regard them as the quintessence of Englishness. Mandler argues that even critics of the present country house cult, who see it as an expression of snobbish nostalgia, misread the past. They magnify the aristocratic contribution to national heritage while neglecting the

influence of popular culture.

Thus the Victorian vogue for country-house visiting, which peaked in 1870, was financed by higher wages, facilitated by more leisure time, fuelled by steam and fostered by travel agents like Thomas Cook (who wanted to keep people out of pubs). It was also inspired by the quest for a cultural inheritance which had more to do with romantics like Walter Scott than with prosaic aristocrats. They themselves tolerated the intrusion to assuage class antagonisms.

Struck by the agrarian depression in the late 19th century, many owners charged for entry, sold or closed their houses. Chatsworth and Knole restricted access. Waldorf Astor built a stone wall topped with broken glass around Cliveden, earning himself the nickname "Walled-Off Astor". As the peerage faced fiscal and political assaults which culminated in Lloyd George's People's Budget, its palatial mansions were more often deemed "fortresses of barbarism" (Matthew Arnold's phrase) than strongholds of civilisation. The proprietors looked upon them as white elephants. So after the First World War great estates were broken up and, after the Second, demolitions continued apace. Between the wars visits to stately homes reached their nadir. Only about two dozen were open, as opposed to 350 today.

The current boom did not really begin until the 1960s. Governments had earlier given tax relief, helped the National Trust and subsidised owners who opened their doors. But what chiefly revived stately homes was the arrival of a vast new public, motorised and conservation-minded. They flocked to enjoy houses that the Gowers Report called "England's greatest contribution to the visual arts", and valued homeliness as well as stateliness.

This summary does scant justice to Mandler's long, sophisticated but sometimes tiresomely abstract account. It is certainly open to crit-



Lord Montagu of Salisbury

cism. While admirably tart about the taste of patricians, Mandler underestimates the quasi-magical sway they have exercised over England's caste-ridden society. As late as 1939, Chips Channon could crow: "It is the aristocracy which still runs this country although nobody seems to realise it." Nevertheless, this book is less a *tour d'horizon* than a *tour de force*. Moreover, it is handsomely illustrated but modestly priced - another triumph for Yale.

Dance to the music of time

Geoff Dyer learns raving history

Altered State: the story of Ecstasy culture and Acid House by Matthew Collin with contributions from John Godfrey, Serpent's Tail, £10.99

Future social histories of our period will make much of the outcome of next week's election. Yet in the context of the sea change engendered by chemicals and music described here, that event seems like an incidental detail. The structure of feeling of Britain has been changed in ways that will be manifest long after the next government has come and gone. Fashion and music change quickly, but we can take solace in Ecstasy culture's "unprecedented longevity". The music has kept improving and, amazingly, the scene has kept growing. *Altered State* explains how.

The chief difficulty in writing about Ecstasy is the enormous gulf between those who have been part of it and those outside. From within, the tone tends towards the cringe-making sub-literacy of the recent *Disco Biscuits* anthology. Back in the late 1970s, by contrast, someone like Dick Hebdige puffed up his reputation by putting "youth culture" through a sub-Roland Barthes mincer, the novelty depending on the palpable gap between what was being discussed and the style of its dissection. Since the hallmark of Ecstasy is that it is participatory, any attempt to process it in these terms would be laughable.

Matthew Collin's and John Godfrey's excellent book is dedicated to the friends "who lived it with us", but it is also a model of judicious evaluation and clarity. True to their subject, they emphasise that their version of events offers one of a number of possible remixes. It is hard to imagine that theirs will soon be bettered. Much of the story - from the rediscovery of MDMA (the active component of Ecstasy) in the 1960s, the Warehouse, Ibiza, raves and Leah Betts ("a symbol not of innocence defiled but of the chasm in understanding between generations") to super-clubs catering for "the chemical generation" - will be vaguely familiar. Yet events already

semi-mythical are synched in with obscure incidents, and the experiences of ravers, to create a narrative that is constantly informative and utterly compulsive. Since the initial acid-house cult has long since splintered into God knows how many sub-sects, this in itself is no mean achievement.

Even more impressive, though, is the way that the narrative is shaped. A few minutes after starting the prologue, you feel a rush of admiration for the way that the myriad inflections and ambiguities have been arrayed. "The recurring story within Ecstasy culture," it argues, "is of people coming into the scene, being inspired by the revelatory flash of the primal Ecstasy experience, then... altering the direction of the scene itself by applying their own personal frame of reference to their experience."

The attractions of Ecstasy are obvious: "It is the best entertainment format on the market, a deployment of technologies - musical, chemical and computer - to deliver altered states of consciousness." At the same time, it "offers a forum to which people can bring narratives about class, race, sex, economics or morality." While the culture challenged the "vested interests that control the leisure industry", its dependence on an illegal drug meant that gangsters were soon fighting over the profits. "Thousands danced in blissed-out ignorance" of the fact that "their pleasures were facilitated by violence and terror".

On the one hand, Ecstasy is subversive - "as drug use became normalised criminality was democratised". On the other, subversion has been commodified. Like all the best historians, what's more, the authors have that knack of making this analysis an inherent - rather than supplementary - quality of the narrative itself.

Altered State is not just timely; it was crying out to be written. Anyone who has played a small part in this still unfolding story will want to read this book because it explains what they have lived through; anyone who hasn't, should.

What a load of merchant bankers

Many years ago, I lived just around the corner from Lord's Cricket Ground. One weekend, when my father was down from the north-east on business, we went to the Eton vs Harrow match. The weather was not good and neither was the cricket, but the admission price was more than justified when, fortified by the endless supply of drink in the parental hamper, a group of 50 or so floppy-haired youths set up a raucous chant of "Eton are wankers". "Well," my dad said gleefully, "that's not something you'd ever hear at Headingly."

During the course of *People Like Us*, his odyssey through the world of the upper classes, Charles Jennings also visits the Eton vs Harrow match, directed there by Lady Celestia Noel's *Harpers & Queen Book of the Season*. This social Baedeker guides him to Royal Ascot, Henley, the Burghley Horse Trials and Queen Charlotte's Ball, among other events.

Jennings's experience at Lord's is similar to my own. The match proves to be that incontrovertibly blue-blooded mixture of impeccable manners and yobbishness which lends weight to the view that the difference between "horseplay"

Harry Pearson ticks off a toff-baiter

People Like Us: a season among the upper classes by Charles Jennings, Little, Brown, £15.99

and "hooliganism" is whether the perpetrator pronounces his aitches or not. For Jennings, the afternoon culminates not in songs about onanism, but when his friend answers an upper-class old coot's inquiry about the identity of the umpire with: "He's got a white coat on, and he's got a face as brown as a tinker's nut bag."

The match is the high point of *People Like Us*. Which is a pity, not only because it comes only a third of the way through this slim book, but also because what has preceded it is really very funny. The book begins brightly with Jennings neatly identifying the peculiar inverted snobbery of the English, to whom "Posh people... start where I leave off". (Jennings indulges in quite a bit of this social self-deprecation himself, telling us, among other things, how he "tricked" his way into Oxford. But did you ever meet an Oxford

or Cambridge graduate who got in on merit?)

There are some entertaining tales extracted from the diaries of James Lees-Milne. And a bizarre conversation with an upper-class woman about the bourgeois danger of saying "some coffee" rather than "a cup of coffee" leads to a pin-sharp dissection of the high-class habit of dropping in on a way which only serves to further emphasise your privilege. It concludes with a deft filleting of Tony Benn: "If he really wanted to leave Viscount Stansgate behind, he'd have run a newsagents or found a position designing blumminised garages, instead of doing the obvious and becoming daffy officer material in the vanguard of the proletarian army. These patricians only give up the perks of high birth when they die."

There is a funny story, too, from a prep school master (who tells Jennings that the little boys' sports jackets were made of such stout tweed that they stood up on their own) and a stream of accurate and amusing observations about upper-class voices during a day at Ascot.

After the trip to Lord's, however, the whole thing rather fizzles out. Jennings maintains an impressive level of outrage (despite a vague feeling of envy that begins to overtake him at a Sloane Ranger's birthday party) but the social events soon begin to blur into one another. The toffs, almost uniformly vacuous and repellent, work hard to confirm Henry Miller's assertion that only the great resemble one another.

The problem, I think, lies with Jennings's choice of subject. Ridicule, however well-aimed, can only carry a writer so far. In his first book, *Up North*, Jennings travelled beyond the Watford Gap and was rude about what he found. In *People Like Us* he takes a similar approach to the aristocracy. The result is not broad enough to sustain an entire book.

In being nasty first about northerners and now the upper classes, the author may think he is living dangerously. But in England - particularly educated, middle-class England - contempt is always the safest opinion to express. Jennings is a sharp-eyed and witty writer. Next time he should really take his life in his hands and write about something he likes.

Paperbacks

By Christopher Hirst, Emma Hagestadt and Paul Binding

The Gunpowder Plot by Antonia Fraser (Weidenfeld, £12.99) The atrocity planned for 6 November 1605 remains the most famous terrorist episode in British history. This compelling account explores both the religious persecution which prompted these "brave, misguided" Catholics and the complex detail of their doomed plan. Not only were they betrayed from the outset, but their gunpowder was so decayed that it would never have exploded anyway. Narrative history at its best, this dark tale becomes painful as the prisoner "John Johnson" is tortured into revealing himself as Guido Fawkes.

Resident Alien by Quentin Crisp (Flamingo, £7.99) The diaries of Britain's great export to the Big Apple are studded with one-liners: "Los Angeles is New York lying down"; "I have always held the opinion that it would be less depressing to be alcoholic than to be anonymous". Astute and gutsy, Crisp possesses phenomenal energy for his age, but, unfortunately for his readers, travels in order to be seen rather than to see. His quaint, mannered style becomes a trifle wearing, particularly his affectation of giving everyone titles, as in "Mr Milton" (John), "Mr Claus" (Santa) and "Mr Hur" (Ben).

In Search of Dracula by Raymond McNally & Radu Florescu (Robson, £9.99) This rum but scholarly study is the latest in a long line of flesh-creeper (the

first appeared in 1499) devoted to the grisly doings of old toothy. Despite Ceausescu's attempt to rehabilitate Dracula, he emerges as a disagreeable fellow whose speciality was not putting the bite on people but doing nasty things with a sharp pole. His addiction to impalement continued even when imprisoned, substituting mice for humans. The authors, who discovered Castle Dracula in 1969, bring the story up to date with a 40-page filmography.

The Evil That Men Do by Brian Masters (Black Swan, £7.99) This kaleidoscopic view of good and evil is sub-titled "From Saints to Serial Killers", but the latter (not always serial in nature) outweigh the former in a proportion of about 12:1. Perhaps goodness is by its very nature hard to write about - Masters is reduced to showbiz "saints" like Audrey Hepburn and Bob Geldof. His cool analysis of evil is inevitably jarred by the horrific examples, from Jeffrey Dahmer to Dachau. Goodness, he concludes, depends on "constant alertness". An intelligent, readable but depressing book.

Perfectly Correct by Philippa Gregory (HarperCollins, £5.99) Successful academic, Dr Louise Chase, has a neat country cottage, a neat bob and a commitment-free relationship with her best friend's husband. A tidy life, except for her inexplicable passion for a local farmer with periwinkle-blue eyes and no interest in gender studies. Gregory has tried her hand at

contemporary satire before, and this gently romantic, naughty read shows her story-telling skills travel well. For women who invest in silk pyjamas, but know deep down they shouldn't bother.

Exquisite Corpse by Poppy Z Brite (Phoenix, £5.99) Eating people is wrong, but young American "punk-slash" writer, Poppy Z Brite, almost makes it OK. When English serial killer Andrew Compton arrives in New Orleans, the last thing he expects is to fall in love, especially with a fellow psycho-killer. But having something in common always helps, and soon he and Jay are cruising the French Quarter and dining on a foul-smelling jambalaya. On a foul-smelling jambalaya. Even if this spooky Anne Rice/Clive Barkerish tale isn't your usual cup of tea, Brite's book is sickeningly compelling.

Photocopies by John Berger (Bloomsbury, £6.99) This collection of essays describing "moments" spent with late twentieth-century Europeans by one time Booker Prize winner.

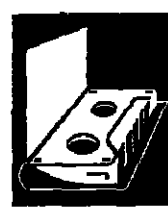
John Berger, reads like an Inter-Railer's wet dream. His "Euro-encounters" include standing under a plum tree with a beautiful young fresco-restorer from Galicia; chewing the cud with assorted peasants; and talking Paul Klee with just about anyone who will listen. At times Berger's writing is so affected it's hard not to laugh - though when it comes to describing the blue of the Aegean, or the yellow of a French post van, he's a hard man to resist.

The Professor's House by Willa Cather (Virago, £6.99) Cather's masterpiece tells the story of a retiring academic who has fallen out of love with life, exhausted by his riven family and depressed by the materialism of 1920s America. And it has inset in it - like a glowing jewel - an account of his dearest student's numinous experience in a New Mexico pueblo. Virago have also re-issued the First World War novel *One of Ours* and the lyrical *My Antonia* (£6.99) to mark the 50th anniversary of Cather's death, with Hermione Lee's model biography *A Life Saved* (£8.99).

moments in this retelling of the 1981 jokey horror classic. The original cast (Jenny Agutter, Brian Glover, John Woodvine) do their terrified thing superbly. **Spoonface Steinberg** (BBC, 1hr, £5.99) uses Maria Callas's arias to punctuate the story of how opera helps a brilliant but autistic seven-year-old come to terms with the fact she has terminal cancer. I know, I know, it does sound a bit over the top on slush factor, but ten-year-old Becky Simpson reads with a straightforward simplicity that makes Lee Hall's dramatic monologue quite unforgettable.

Christina Hardymont

Audiobooks



Dirk Maggs's latest "audiomovie" *An American Werewolf in London* (BBC, 2hrs, £8.99), is like all his "surround sound" masterpieces, best heard on headphones. Ghostly gurgles from the werewolf's victims are perhaps a little too prolific, but there are plenty of chuckleworthy



The totem of Taboo

Chris Savage King on an Eighties icon

If London really is a centre of culture again, it's largely due to applied art-school intelligence. Leigh Bowery was one of the brightest blooms on this circuit in the 1980s. Sue Tilley's memoir of him, *Leigh Bowery: portrait of an icon* (Hodder, £9.99), is honest and affectionate. A consummate *objet d'art*, Bowery got on best with people with whom he could show off intellectually. He is best remembered for his outrageous fashion designs, but was also a sitter for Lucian Freud, a performance artist, a keen shoplifter, and an inveterate liar.

The Eighties were a time of naked ambition and hardcore hedonism. The door policy of Bowery's club - Taboo - was unequivocal: "Dress as if your life depends on it, or don't bother". Yet if you ever managed to get in, it was surprisingly friendly. Bowery was a trouper. When he was diagnosed HIV-positive in 1988, he kept it secret for a long while. He wasn't interested in becoming a professional victim. We'll never know what Bowery would have made of the 1990s. The get-out-of-my-way-or-I'll-kill-you ethos that he embodied with such aplomb is no longer popular. The Mc generation has been replaced by "me too" and the current rave-style of clubbing - in which you leave your ego at the door - would not have suited him at all.

Still, his legacy lingers in those he inspired, and in a few convictions he shared with them: "Be brave, do what you want, and don't be afraid of failure - never give up". This is a charming and raffish book, a fitting tribute to someone who lived fast, died young and stayed pretty. He packed more into his time than many manage in a much longer life.

Left: Lucian Freud's 1993 portrait of Leigh Bowery

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Nowhere quite like Alex – achingly literary and swathed in legend. European colonialists made it a centre of trade and intrigue

PHOTOGRAPH: ABOVE MAGNUM/HARRY GRUYAERT. BELOW HUTCHINSON LIBRARY

Between the desert and the deep blue sea

On the edge of the Sahara, where the Nile meets the Med, lies Alexandria, a modern metropolis still in thrall to its literary past, writes Martin Buckley

In Bombay I used to know an old English poet who had been disgraced by life. He slept by night in the slums around Crawford Market, and wandered by day in the streets around the Museum, with his possessions—mostly years of poems—bundled up in plastic bags. Geoffrey Hann's life as an artist and servant of Empire had taken him by stages from the Levant, to Cambridge, to India. But the place where it had begun seemed to have made his exotic journey almost inevitable. For Geoffrey had been born in Alexandria.

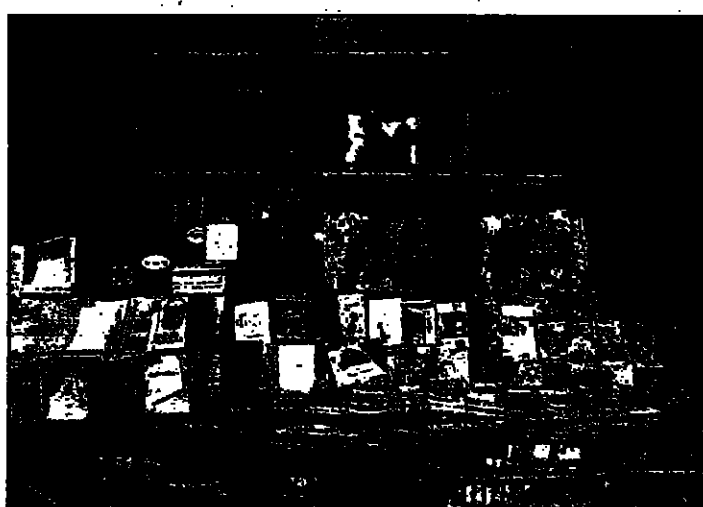
The city is so swathed in legend and so achingly literary that any visit here becomes in part a journey into your own imagination. At first sight there seems to be little that's essentially Alexandrian. Expecting to see remnants of Alexander the Great's capital, you stare at buildings that might be in Athens or Naples – the shoe shops, burger bars and Benetton's of a city that longs to be modern. But, for British visitors tempted by the new flights that began from Gatwick this month, the pleasures of Alex are more decadent and perverse – the satisfactions of faded grandeur, nostalgia and decay.

If you want to wallow in literary Alexandria (and can afford it), you'll stay at the Cecil Hotel. You may come reeling from the horror of Shepherd's Hotel in Cairo (evoked in *The English Patient* in all

its colonial glory, but now a multi-storey box), in which case the Cecil will restore some of your faith in truth and beauty. They all came to the Cecil — Churchill, Coward, Forster, Churchill, Maugham; here Churchill's fictional heroine Christine made her first big entrance, clad "in a sheath of silver drops". Despite being "modernised" (and renamed the Pullman Cecil), the hotel has retained a discreet charm and a sense of pride in its incidental roots. ("Would you like some milk tea with English cake, sir?" asked a waiter.) It stands at the midpoint of the semicircular Corniche, with views of the blue Mediterranean and bobbing fishing boats, and the butter-coloured Gaybay Fort.

This 15th-century defence is in effect the stump of that wonder of the world, the Pharos lighthouse, which towered 400 feet over the harbour, lighting the gateway from Greece to Egypt. It was raised in 300BC and levelled by an earthquake around AD1300; they built the fort from the rubble.

Alexandria lies at the north-western corner of the Nile Delta, caught between desert, verdure and sea. There is plenty of ancient history buried among the 19th-century and Art Deco piles that make up so much of its crumbling fabric. The Corniche once featured a pair of Pharaonic "Cleopatra's Needles", but to see one of



A town called Alex

How to fly there
British Mediterranean Airways flies three times each week from Gatwick to Alexandria, on behalf of British Airways. The telephone sales team (on 0345 222111) does not appear to be entirely aware of the new flights, so you may have to insist that they check under the airport code, AEX. If you book by Monday, you qualify for a World Offer fare of £312.90 return, including tax.

Who to ask: The Egyptian State Tourist Office is at Third Floor, Egyptian House, 170 Piccadilly, London W1V 9DD (0171-493 5282). British citizens require a visa, issued by the Visa Section of the Consulate-General, at 2 Lowndes Street, London SW1X 9ET (0171-235 9777). You need a passport, a photograph and £15.

these today you'll have to travel to London's Victoria Embankment. Pompey's Pillar, however, offers some compensation: a column 72ft high, cut from a single chunk of pink granite. Around it lie fragments of Cleopatra's great library, for 400 years the most learned location on earth, and destroyed, it is worth remembering, not by "them" but by "us" — a Christian mob, attacking "paganism".

Looking at the small clutter of cisterns and sphinxes around the Pillar, I found it extraordinary to think that it is all that remains of a vast Ptolemaic acropolis. The site of worship and study is now one of Alexandria's gloomiest slums.

A tout approached me. He was toothless and unshaven, wore a torn anorak, and had a few tourist trinkets draped over him. He had a desperate look, and did not so much ask as order me to follow him. Some distance into the warren of buildings I found my tongue and told him I would not go any further. He silently shrugged, and strode off. And I wandered on through the narrow streets, with their domestic refuse and dangling clothes-lines.

With a little help, I found my way to the catacombs. These subterranean tombs span the whole history of Alexandria, eliding religions and architectural styles into a jumble of mummies, medusas and Egyptian gods dressed as Roman

legionnaires. Back towards the seafront, I reached the Roman odeon, a neat mini-Colosseum with marble seating and some patches of mosaic flooring. It was once surrounded by a pleasure garden dedicated to the god Pan, and given over to the pursuit of earthly delights – the same delights, no doubt, that drew literary Europeans in the Thirties and Forties.

European colonialists gave Alexandria a lift after it had lain dormant for a millennium, making it a centre of trade and intrigue. When they were sent packing by the Egyptian president Nasser after the Suez crisis, the city lost its louché cosmopolitanism. To recapture it today, wander through the decaying streets, and pause at a tea shop to enjoy a hubble-bubble pipe; or you might sit in a mirrored pâtisserie, with the works of the Greek poet Cavafy propped up next to your croissant. Cavafy's

house is now a small museum, but in the Thirties there was a brothel on the ground floor. "Where could I live better?" Cavafy asked. "Below, the brothel caters for the flesh. And there is the church which forgives sin. And there is the hospital where we die." In fact, as a homosexual, he did not make use of the brothel, preferring to pick up boys in the cafes behind the Cecil.

In the bookshops of Alexandria you'll find Durrell, Geoffrey, Forster; but you won't find Geoffrey Hann. In Bombay, I used to ask him if he thought he'd ever see Alexandria—or England—again. "No," he said. But that didn't stop him dreaming. In one of his last poems, "Nearly Over," he wrote: "I who am rootless as desert air/ Could I put down an archaeological root in Cleopatra's city/ Canvass' too— Alexandria?/ It is fitting that in the Coarseness of time/ should exit where I entered/ In my case just a closing of the sand."

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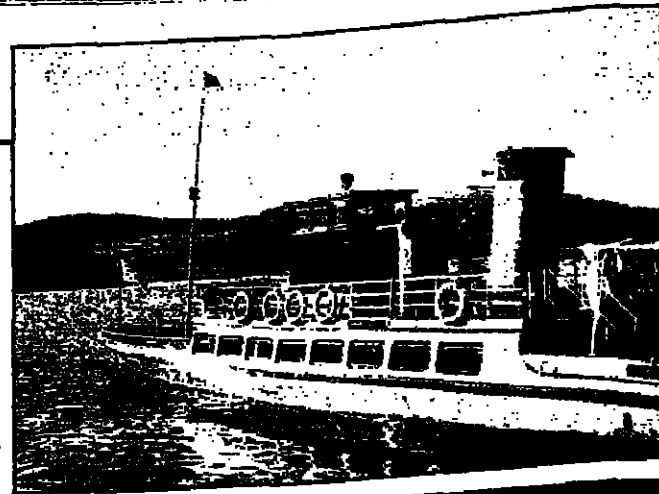
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Poets' corner



In the wake of Wordsworth and Coleridge, inspiration is easy to find. Hunter Davies divines the best of Lake District attractions, both classic and modern

Over the years, mountains take on new colours, textures and even contours; lakes change their width, their depth, their shape

PHOTOGRAPHS: MSI

You've probably been to the Lake District; billions have, since the passion for visiting this small area first started in 1770. At the back of your mind you can doubtless remember a school trip, a tent near some lake – was it Windermere or Loch Lomond? – no, wrong country, but you can clearly remember the rain.

Billions of visitors? Surely some mistake? Well with 15 million visitors a year spending at least three hours in Lakeland, it must be more than a billion by now. About 150 years ago, when the railways first arrived, Wordsworth was moaning about the possibility of 10,000 of the unwashed from Lancashire getting off the trains in Windermere.

Writing about Lakeland means you have to take account of the fact that so many Brits do know the Lake District, have been many times, love it dearly, and have their own favourite bits which they guard in their minds and don't want exposed in print. But each year there are also several million first-time visitors who don't know their way around, who ask for the Beatrix Potteries, inquire about boats from Bowness to the Isle of Man or would like a copy of the latest *Dorothy's Journal*.

In theory, mountains and lakes don't change. How can they: it's Nature? But of course they do, all the time. Over the years, mountains have taken on new colours, textures and even contours, thanks to mining, erosion, farming, plantations. Lakes have changed their width, their depth, their shape, their con-

tent, thanks to the weather, pollution, fishing, boating and assorted laws and regulations. Haweswater, Thirlmere and Tarn Hows may look lovely, but they are essentially man-made. Underneath Haweswater is a drowned village, and if Lakeland is as dry as it has been these past three years, it will probably pop out again. Ullswater, Crummock and Ennerdale do look totally natural, but even they have been cunningly "reservoired" around the edges. The most obvious recent changes and developments are in towns and villages – though not all. In Lakeland there has been a whole host of golden new arrivals in the past two years, tossing their leaflets in sprightly dance to catch the breeze, or at least our attention.

New visitors want to know what I shouldn't miss. Old visitors, meanwhile, want to know what's new. Not necessarily to go to see these changes. In fact it may be a useful warning. So, for both these sorts and conditions of visitors, here are my top five – Classic and Modern.

Classic Lakeland

A lake steamer. Every visitor should have a boat trip, up or down a lake. It's such an easy introduction, a lazy way of getting the feel and the flavour of Lakeland without in fact doing any work. There are four lakes with a regular service. Windermere, being 10 miles long, provides the longest trip, about 90 minutes one way, and is the most popular, with more than 1 million boat passengers last year, but it

can get very busy. Ullswater has equally attractive boats, and is much quieter. But Derwent Water boats are smaller and noisier, and are of more use in getting to various points around the lake than as a pleasure in themselves. The most elegant, artistic boat ride is on *Condole*, an 1859 steam yacht, which sails on Conistone.

An easy walk. For those wanting a low-level, family stroll, Rydal Water is the most convenient, as it's right in the heart

of Lakeland – on the road between Grasmere and Rydal, with good parking. But don't walk on the road itself. The walk is along the other side of the lake. It is a round walk – one way along the shore, returning at a higher level.

An easy climb – so that you feel a bit more pleased with yourself, having gained some height and self-respect. Catbells, overlooking Derwent Water, is the most rewarding fell for the least outlay.

A harder climb. There are three mountains higher than 3,000ft, so you should do them all, as a true laker. Skiddaw is the easiest. As it's just outside Keswick, it's easy to get started here – and it's easy to ascend. Helvellyn is a bit harder, and more dramatic on top. Scafell Pike takes longest, but is the most satisfying. You can then say you've done the highest peak in England.

A famous house. There are two that should not be missed – both modest, as houses, but fascinating because they are as they were when the famous person lived there. In each case, the person is part of Lakeland – and ever will be. Mr Wordsworth's Dove Cottage is in Grasmere – open daily, 9.30am-5pm, adults £4.25, children £2. (015394 35544) and Miss Potter's Hill Top is at Sawrey – Saturday-Wednesday, 11am-4.30pm, adults £3.60, children £1.70 (015394 362690).

Modern Lakeland

The Beacon at Whitehaven – open Tuesday-Sunday, 10am-5.30pm, adults £3.30, senior citizens £2.75, children £2.10, family ticket £9.50 (01946 592 302). This is a brand-new £4.2m tourist attraction, supposedly to tell you all about Whitehaven's history, which it does, but it's full of hi-tech amusements, the sort that kids are supposed to find fun on a wet day. Useful as a focal point for exploring Whitehaven's Georgian streets and magnificent harbour.

The Dock Museum, Barrow – open Wednesday-Sunday, 10am-5pm week-

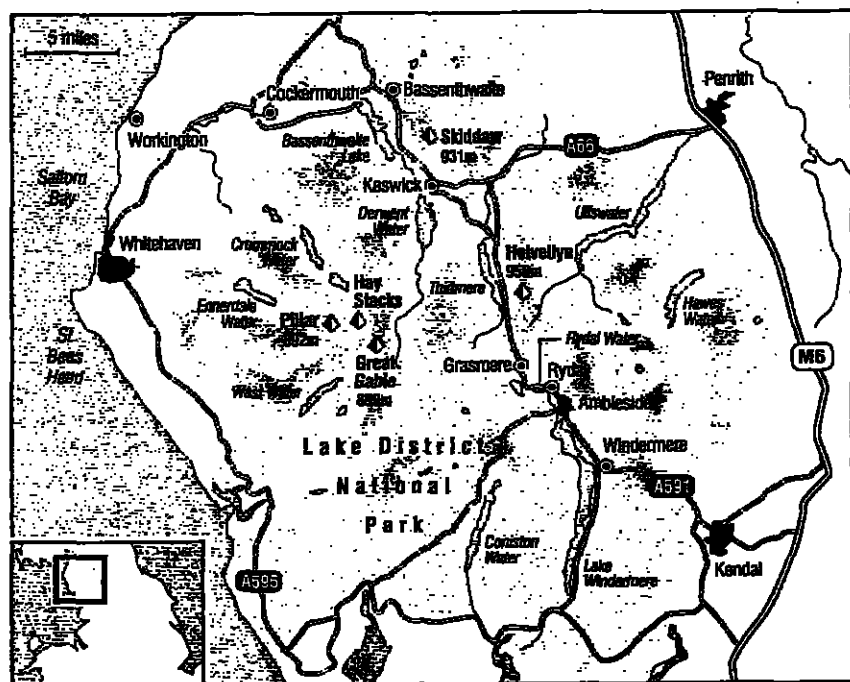
days, 11am-5pm weekends, free admission (01229 870871). Another multi-million-pound modern creation. Where do they get all the money? The building itself is worth seeing – a giant, three-storey conservatory, created out of a sandstone dock. A snip at £5m.

The Oasis Forest Holiday Village, near Penrith opens next Friday, 2 May. The new holiday complex is fully booked for the first week, but reservations for subsequent weeks are being taken on (0940 086000). This is heralded as Cumbria's biggest-ever man-made tourist attraction – 700 lodges, built at a cost of £100m, which will attract 300,000 visitors a year. What on earth would Wordsworth have thought?

Lakeland Wool and Sheep Centre, Cockermouth – daily shows at 10.30am, 12pm, 2pm and 3.30pm, adults £3, children £1.50 (01900 822 6730). I have seen this, and it's hysterical. Well I burst out laughing when I sat in its 300-seater theatre and watched 19 pedigree sheep walk on stage, find their own dairy and name, then pose and pout. Very like a Miss World contest.

Andy Goldsworthy. The well known sculptor has secured £600,000 to reconstruct Sheep Folds, the sort that you see fallen down all over Lakeland. As works of art, of course. A hundred of these will be reappearing between now and the Millennium.

Hunter Davies is the author of *The Good Guide to the Lakes*, published by Forster Davies, price £5.99.



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Summer starts with a Spanish cloud – but Greece is back

Thursday, 1 May, sees the dawn of an optimistic era for Britain's air travellers. Nothing to do with the election – Thursday just happens to be the day when the summer charter schedules start. There are some causes for hope that this summer will be better than last.

Airtours International has a May Day plan to eliminate delays that some travellers suffered last year, such as the 52-hour wait my colleague Wendy Berliner experienced in Orlando. Airtours is keeping a plane on standby at Manchester airport from 1 May. The aircraft will be fully crewed, ready to take off if other planes "go technical".

Its big rival, Britannia Airways, says it has operated a back-up plane for the past four years. Britannia has chosen International Workers' Day, 1 May, to ditch its long-established Royal Service in favour of a new, classless (if that is not a contradiction in terms) "360" class. Also on Thursday, AB Airlines opens a new route to Portugal: cheap flights from Gatwick to Lisbon.



Simon Calder

These are mere silver linings compared with the forbidding cloud on the horizon: the new airport tax being introduced in Spain. Our most popular package holiday destination has imposed a tax of 150 pesetas on travellers. The amount itself – less than 70 pence – is trivial when compared with our Air Passenger Duty of £5 or £10. But Britain's departure tax is an example of how politicians see travel as an easy target: APD is set to double in November, whoever wins the election.

The new tax is the thin end of a potentially expensive wedge: how long before the government in Madrid sees the opportunity for tapping the 10 million British visitors each year for a bit more cash? The levy is all the more galling because, as older readers will recall, Spain dispensed with its 50 peseta tourist tax soon after the mass market holiday industry began 30 years ago.

According to one travel company, the true level of Spain's departure tax is not 70p, but £5.

The tour operator Unijet has announced it will henceforth quote prices for seats on its charter flights exclusive of tax. Nigel Jenkins of Unijet says the company has taken this step "in order to create a level playing field with scheduled airlines, who have refused to include taxes in their pricing. From a marketing point of view we've been at a disadvantage."

Up to a point, this is fair enough: it is important for the traveller to compare like with like. Ideally, all fares would be shown inclusive of tax, as they are for almost anything else you buy. But since the two airlines that dominate the flight market to Spain, British Airways and Iberia, choose to advertise fares without tax, it seems reasonable for competing companies to follow suit.

The problem is: how do you define tax? Besides Britain's £5 Air Passenger Duty, Iberia and BA charge only 60p or 70p Spanish tax, respectively. But Unijet adds on a "passenger charge" to make a total of 948 pesetas and rounds the lot up to £5. Next time I take a Unijet flight, I shall offer to pay for a fiver's worth of drinks with 948 pesetas, adding

helpfully: "It's roughly £5." At yesterday's spot rate, I make the charges exactly £4. A cynic (see picture, left) might point out that presented this way, Unijet's fares could look artificially attractive, but Mr Jenkins refutes this suggestion: "Seat-only sales provide the only opportunity we have to show passengers how much of the cost of a flight goes straight to governments in tax."

The other great event on 1 May is that one of our favourite destinations comes out of hibernation, at least according to a branch of a travel agency chain. This week I conducted one of my regular incognito trawls of travel agents. The mission: to find the best flight, either chartered or scheduled, to Athens in April. One agent said flatly that I was wasting my time: "Greece doesn't open until May."

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مكتبة من الأمل

Celluloid city

Screen gem: San Francisco, hero of Hitchcock's re-released 'Vertigo'. Muthena Paul Alkazraji checks out the town-turned-movie star

In a burst of exuberant bed-bouncing at San Francisco's Phoenix Hotel, the lead singer of US hard-core band the Foo Fighters sprang over the bamboo footboard and through the plate-glass window. Perhaps due to the window's sheer effrontery in spoiling the record leap, the band then crashed the rest of the room. The staff at the Phoenix, however, are used to dealing with the excesses of music business characters. This oasis in the otherwise sleazy Tenderloin district is a regular check-in for touring rock bands and their road crews. If your travel budget/record label will cover the damage, you are more than welcome to turn up here and swing your Stratocaster around in a Pete Townshend-like manner.

The hotel's guest list reads like a duplicate of invitees to a Q Music Awards ceremony. As well as luminaries from US rock's hall of fame, it has also hosted many a visiting Brit. Tears for Fears, Radiohead and Blur have all stayed here, and a faded UB40 tour-sticker still clings stubbornly to the chambermaid's cleaning trolley. To their credit, hotel employees have a reputation for showing neither star-struck obsequiousness to rock deities – not so easy when David Bowie is in your foyer – nor disdain for lesser travelling mortals.

A salmon-pink colour scheme, piped bird and cricket song, and tropical plants give the Phoenix a kitschy-fun character. The hotel's kidney-shaped swimming pool, with its swirling 1969 artwork on the bottom, circumscribes a local pool bylaw (no swimming designs on pool-bottoms) by obtaining California landmark status. Inside, the hotel's Voodoo Bar and Lounge – named, so I was told, to ward off the legal curse of the Rolling Stones management – the décor includes zebra-skin wallpaper, bone-draped lighting and bongo-drum bar stools. Miss Pearl's Jam House, the hotel's restaurant, offers Caribbean cuisine. I plumped for "plantain encrusted thresher shark", but my enjoyment was tempered by concern about having endangered the species.

A further facility for the use of guests at the Phoenix, a simple but inspired touch in this favourite city of movie-makers, is its choice of videos shot on

location in San Francisco. Reclining on the bamboo bed in my room, I called up my selections from reception on the in-house cable channel, and set off later to soak up some movie-location ambience. I particularly wanted to walk through scenes in Hitchcock's dark classic, *Vertigo*, re-released in Britain this week.

From the top of Russian Hill, the streets of San Francisco plummet in step-like descent beneath intersecting electrified trolleybus-cables, and down towards the bay and Alcatraz Island. Gradients of up to 31.5 per cent wear away the brake-linings of city taxis on average every 2,000 miles. This is quintessential car-chase territory. It was through these streets that Steve McQueen screeched in a Ford Mustang GT, pursuing the hitmen who had assassinated a rival witness under his protection, in the 1968 thriller *Bullitt*. Hand-held cameras caught the tender, crunching action from the passenger seat.

SAN FRANCISCO: TAKE 1

Three airlines fly non-stop from London Heathrow to San Francisco: British Airways (0345 222111), United Airlines (0181-990 9900) and Virgin Atlantic (01293 747747). The lowest fares are available through discount agents rather than direct with the airlines. For example, Quest Worldwide (0181-546 6000) quotes £325 including tax on Virgin Atlantic, if you return before 21 June.

The Phoenix Hotel is at 601 Eddy Street, San Francisco, CA 94109 (tel 001 415 776 1380, fax 001 415 885 3109). Rooms start at \$89 per night for a double, and include continental breakfast.

The San Francisco Movie Map gives a short resume and the locations of more than 100 films made in the area. These include classics such as *The Maltese Falcon* and *Daddy's Girl* movies, as well as more recent productions such as *Interview with the Vampire* and *The Rock*. Copies from The Reel Map Co, 5214-F Diamond Heights, Suite 425, San Francisco, CA 94131.

Looking down the streets today, you cannot help but secretly hope to witness some first-hand automotive drama. You hear tyres squeal, you prepare to dive into the trash-cans, but it's just some old brown Buick slipping on the gradient.

Across town at the cemetery of Mission Dolores, a whitewashed chapel on the beautiful palm-lined boulevard of Dolores Street, a scene from *Vertigo*, the film that cast San Francisco's magnificent vistas in a starring role alongside James Stewart and Kim Novak, was played out. It was here that the acrophobic Scottie (Stewart) secretly followed the hags Madeleine (Novak) to the site of Carlotta Valdez's grave. Following in their footsteps through the quiet chapel, San Francisco's oldest building, I scoured the graveyard for Carlotta's resting-place, but this detail turned out to be fictional. Her headstone apparently remained in the garden as a tourist attraction for some years after filming, but with visitors passing the real tombstones to get to a film prop, the bishop decided that it had to go.

Still shadowing Madeleine, the millionaire shipping-magnate's wife, in his De Soto, Scottie later drove down to the one location which, above all others, is the city's defining symbol. I continued to shadow them both. Arching between the San Francisco peninsula and Marin County, the Golden Gate Bridge carries more than 100,000 vehicles a day across its two-mile span. Relatively few visitors, however, descend from the view-point at the Toll Plaza down to sea level at Fort Point, an old US Army fortress which squats directly below the rumbling roadway. It was here, set against the spectacular backdrop of the two towering 740ft steel suspension towers, that Madeleine faked her suicide attempt by falling into the freezing waters of San Francisco Bay. Here Scottie dived in to rescue her, and here my search for authentic movie ambience found a sensible cut-off point.

Back at the Phoenix, I checked the kidney-shaped pool for rock stars. There was neither living legend splashing about, nor the dead, floating variety. Just one young man, with handsome sideburns, dark sunglasses and a Britpop-ish lingo, looked as if he must fit somewhere in the rock-schema – but I didn't know who he was.



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City Breaks

Italy
Milan 3 nts 2 star £265
Rome 3 nts 2 star £228
Venice 3 nts 2 star £243
Florence 3 nts 2 star £231
Sorrento £399
(0171) 629 7772
France
Paris 3 nts 2 star £265
Nice 3 nts 2 star £243
Marseille 3 nts 2 star £231
Lyon 3 nts 2 star £228
Bordeaux 3 nts 2 star £215
Nantes 3 nts 2 star £208
Strasbourg 3 nts 2 star £201
Lille 3 nts 2 star £194
Toulouse 3 nts 2 star £187
Montpellier 3 nts 2 star £180
Nîmes 3 nts 2 star £173
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Poitiers 3 nts 2 star £152
Angoulême 3 nts 2 star £145
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Montpellier-Mérignac 3 nts 2 star £12
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Self Catering UK

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Tanks for the wildlife

Country: Nicholas Schoon on plans to develop Army land in national parks

Look at an OS map of the north of Dartmoor National Park, or the heart of Northumberland National Park, and you see lots of red ink, warning of danger areas.

Go to either of these places, and what do you find amid the wild, bleak scenery? Big signs warning people to keep away when the Army is firing; red flags fluttering; barriers across the roads. Gunfire often smoothes the sounds of the wind in the heather, lark song and rushing water.

Then look at your map again, and reflect that this indispensable guide to Britain's walkers and nature lovers had military origins. The Ordnance Survey was carried out to help gunners shell accurately in every bit of Britain.

The Ministry of Defence owns or is licensed to use land in nine of the 11 National Parks in England and Wales. Hardest hit are Northumberland (22 per cent of its area is MoD controlled), Dartmoor (15 per cent) and the Pembrokeshire Coast in southwest Wales (5 per cent). For much of the time the public have to keep out or risk prosecution – and their lives.

Yet these parks are designated as our most precious terrain, and Acts of Parliament say their natural beauty should be preserved to promote public enjoyment. What on earth is the military doing here?

It's a question rambles and environmentalists have been asking since the parks were founded half a century ago. It was raised again this week, with the opening of a public inquiry into the

Army's plans for developing its big Otterburn training area, straddling the middle of Northumberland National Park. It is the least visited and most remote of the parks: 400 square miles of moor and low mountain, just south of the Scottish border.

The inquiry will last as long as six months and cost the taxpayer more than £2.5m. The artillery wants to use Otterburn to train with its Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) and its Artillery System 90 big gun. These heavy, tracked vehicles would sink into the soft, peaty soil. So the plan is to widen nearly 30 miles of narrow, metalled roads through the training area, and build new gun emplacements. New huts would be built to house extra soldiers in its Otterburn camp, plus a concrete vehicle park the size of a couple of football pitches – to be screened by trees. Three more miles of track would be built on the hillsides.

The military is not the only culprit in such developments. A nuclear power station, now defunct, was built at Trawsfynydd in Saowdonia. In the mid-Eighties five miles of dual carriageway was pushed through Dartmoor National Park, allowing the busy A30 to bypass Okehampton.

But whereas it is extremely unlikely that these kind of developments would be allowed today, the military pressure on the parks seems likely to continue. The Army would like an extra 39,000 hectares of training area in Britain – the equivalent of another Salisbury Plain – following the ending of the

Cold War, which enabled the Army to withdraw most of its armour and soldiers from Germany.

The Army argues that its very presence helps conserve the landscape and wildlife of the parks. Apart from the shell holes, red flags and warning signs, Otterburn is the least spoilt, most natural part of the Northumberland National Park.

Conifer plantations, decried by a generation of hill walkers, are not much in evidence. Overgrazing by sheep and cattle has been kept in check; there are 31 sheep and cattle farms in Otterburn rented from the Army, but grazing is limited.

Training grounds such as Otterburn provide a haven for endangered wildlife – both inside and beyond the National Parks – because intensive agriculture has not been allowed to harm them. Salisbury Plain is Britain's largest remaining fragment of the rolling chalk downlands that once covered much of southern England. Most of this habitat has been ploughed for crops or "improved" with fertiliser – wiping out many wild flowers.

The stone curlew, a wading bird that has adapted to live on dry land, survives on the plain. So does the hobby, a magnificent bird of prey, four nationally scarce butterflies, and other rarities. If the army were to leave, the plain would qualify for instant designation as a National Park.

The Army wants to move AS90 training to Otterburn so as to make the maximum possible use of Salisbury

Plain for tank training. It is one of few areas where the ground is hard enough for them to roam freely. As for the MLRS, Otterburn is the only UK training area where this fearsome weapon can launch its salvo without having to close a major public road. Even its practice rocket, which does not fly as far as the real thing, requires a completely unpopulated safety zone 11 miles long and two miles wide. That is not available on Salisbury Plain.

The key issues for the public inquiry are whether the disturbance that this means for Northumberland National Park can be justified. Government policy is that there should be no major construction in the parks unless there are exceptional circumstances, and it is in the national interest.

The Army argues yes on both counts. Its main opponents, the Northumberland National Park Authority, the county council and a coalition of conservation groups, will try to demonstrate that the military has failed to consider other ways of training with this new artillery. Could it use computer simulation instead? Train overseas? Use other areas, or buy some new land altogether? No, no, no and no, says the Army.

Eventually the Government-appointed inspector will write his report, then the Secretary of State for the Environment will make a decision some time in 1998 or 1999. The best guess is that the Army will get the go-ahead, with a few further restrictions imposed upon it.

The inquiry follows three years of negotiations during which the National Park Authority agreed that there was a case for developing the training area in principle – an important breakthrough for the Army. Yet even after the military made further concessions to reduce the development, and the disturbance training causes to walkers and wildlife, the authority still refused planning permission last year, precipitating the inquiry. Maybe it should have offered a little bit more. Perhaps the Army's mistake was its somewhat aggressive public relations; many locals warmly approve of its presence because of its importance to the local economy. It did not help that the Army's spokesman on this issue also suggested the Authority's chief officer, Graham Taylor, was a Quaker pacifist who might be opposed to the military presence in principle.

Whatever the outcome, the tensions in Northumberland and other national parks will continue. The army will never get the funds to buy or rent large new chunks of training land in other thinly populated areas. It will seek to make the best possible use of the land it already controls, and perhaps add on a few bits around the edges. What it needs is plenty of tact, and a willingness to allow maximum possible public access to its training grounds – brilliant public relations, in short. The thunder of gunfire will rumble on in the hills of Otterburn and other national parks long after the verbal salvos at the inquiry have ceased.



Duff Hart-Davis

'People think grass is magic – grows by itself. In fact, only weeds do'

It was a visit to Highclere Castle, near Newbury, that made me see red – or should I say green? – about my lawn. I know it is foolish to make any comparison. For the Earl of Carnarvon's house is rather larger than mine (200-odd rooms) and his lawns, which cover eight acres, are more extensive. But what hit me was the sheer quality of the grass: even in this dry spring, it was a living Wilton carpet, dense, soft, smooth, springy and without a weed in sight. Returning to my own patch, I saw nothing but bumps, hollows, moss, dandelions and daisies. For advice on how to sort it out, I made contact with Denis Burles, a lawn doctor who lives in Abingdon and operates around the Oxford area.

To diagnose my problem properly, he said, would mean a site visit, for which he charges £36 an hour.

Knowing that Mr Burles was an RAF pilot, and flew passenger jets for British Airways, I reckoned he must be a man with steady nerves; nevertheless, I feared that the sight of my lawn might give him a nasty turn, so to save my own embarrassment (and pocket) I opted for a discussion about lawns in general.

He agreed that many of his clients are fanatical about their grass. Some are so proud of it that they summon him mainly for praise and reassurance. Others are jealous: they have seen a marvellous lawn elsewhere, and want theirs to look like it.

Few gardeners realise how much maintenance grass needs. "People imagine that after years of neglect, everything can be put right in five minutes. They think grass is magic, and grows by itself. In fact, the only things that grow by themselves are weeds."

And moss, I suggested. "Yes," he said. "You get moss if you cut the grass too short, or the soil is compacted. But moss has no roots – only a foot, which anchors it to the ground. It gets its nutrients out of the atmosphere, rather than from the soil. That's why ferrous sulphate kills it."

Ferrous sulphate? We were off into the subject of patent lawn-improvers. Mr Burles is adamant that most are a waste of money. All the average grass needs, he said, is lawn sand, costing a few pence per pound: ordinary sand, that is, with the addition of ferrous sulphate, which scorches moss and most weeds, and sulphate of ammonia, which produces nitrogen.

As for mowing, is it better to box grass off, or leave it on as much? Everything depends on how often you mow. "If you can see the mowings after you've cut, pick

them up; otherwise they'll smother the rest of the grass. But if you can't see them, leave them as mulch."

Yet in periods of drought, such as we are having now, the trick is not to cut too short.

"With the mower shut down and disabled, make sure you can put your hand flat on the ground beneath the blades. That'll give you an inch clearance." In normal weather he is all for "over-sowing" – scattering seed on to thin patches; but with the ground as dry as it is now, seed cannot germinate.

How did he learn all this? After leaving British Airways he took a course at the Sports Turf Research Institute at Bisleigh, did his City and Guilds certificates at Watlington Agricultural College, then day courses organised by the Institute of Groundsmanship at Milton Keynes. Eight years of practical experience have consolidated his expertise.

Besides diagnosing problems, he will also turn surgeon and operate, travelling with a battery of scarifiers and spikers. His busiest season runs from Easter until June, followed by another burst of activity in September and October. Back to my own ground. If I want to create a grass-piece, he said, the only thing to do is to zap every living plant with Roundup and start again: rake of rubbish, Rotavate soil, roll with Cambridge roller, level ground, lay turf or sow seed, roll, water.

Curses! I think I'll settle for the *status quo*, weeds, bumps and all. Denis Burles, 6 Oxford Road, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 2AA (0235 52059)

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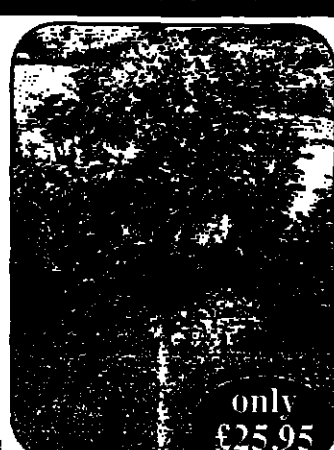
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Bring on the fritillaries

At one time the sight of a field of fritillaries was commonplace in middle and southern England. Fritillary Sundays were held so that the public could enjoy the spectacle. Now the number of these flowers has so diminished that perhaps only a dozen or so fritillary meadows still exist in England.

At Ducklington in the Windrush Valley, however, the tradition is going strong and on Sunday 27 April, visitors will be welcomed to admire the village's fritillary meadow. Local historian Phillip Best explains: "The field was bought by the Peel family who used to live in the manor-house. They were interested in conservation, and allowed people to come and see the flowers. After they left the village, the church continued to operate the celebration and in fact sometimes some of the family turn up to participate."

This year, as in the past, tea and home-made cakes will be served in the village hall and there will be stalls on the village green selling tea-towels and other items decorated with fritillaries. Phillip Best suggests that visitors also make their way to the church, where they will be able to observe fur-

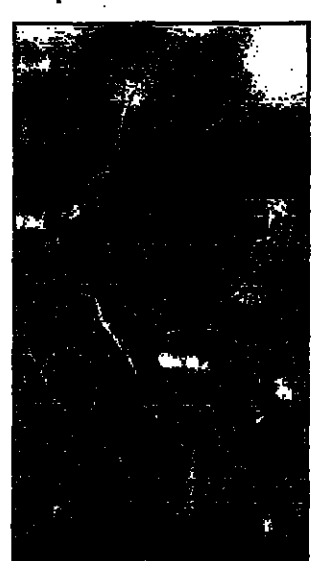
ther evidence of Ducklington's association with fritillaries.

The flowers are embroidered on two modern altar frontals and depicted in a fine stained-glass window, dating from the Thirties, by the Arts and Crafts-influenced artist Caroline Townshend.

Fritillaries are also carved into the 19th-century pulpit from Magdalen College, which itself boasts perhaps the best-known fritillary meadow in England. Indeed, Magdalen's fritillaries may well have come from Ducklington. In the 18th century, the living of the parish was under the patronage of Magdalen College; Richard Mabey in *Flora Britannica* suggests that the incumbent took some of the fritillaries from Ducklington back to his college plant.

People in Ducklington recall gypsies and locals regarding the plants as a lucrative sideline. Children would take fritillary posies to sell in Oxford and Birmingham, and flowers were even sent to Covent Garden. Ducklington was by no means the only place where such a trade existed. If they in Oxfordshire had a tradition of permitting children over nine years old to sell posies in Oxford High Street.

The history of the plant is of interest because it is uncertain whether it is a genuine native wild flower or a garden escapee. The Latin name *Fritillaria meleagris* describes its appearance: *fritillaria* refers to its chequered markings and means a dice box, while *meleagris* refers to the mottled feathering of the guinea-fowl. It has a great many local names, including toad's head, frog cup, dead man's bells, and mourning bells of Solomon. In Berk-



JOHN LAWRENCE

shire it was known as bloody warrior, from the belief that each flower grew from a drop of Dane's blood. The first botanist to mention it was John Blackstone, who in 1736 noted it growing at Maud Field near Ruislip. If the plant were native to this country, it seems unlikely that early botanical writers would have overlooked it.

What is certain, however, is that the fritillary grows best on damp meadows which in the past were known as Lammas land. This was grazed for Lammas Day in August until Candlemas in February, at which time the stock was removed so that a cut of hay could be made in July. Changes in husbandry, extensive land drainage and gravel extraction have been responsible for the demise of many of these meadows, but there is still one magnificent example to be found – the 108-acre North Meadow at Cricklade in Wiltshire. Here, on the alluvial deposits of the flood plain of the rivers Thames and Churn, three-quarters of the British fritillary population still grows. In bloom, it is an unforgettable sight.

While Ducklington is one of the few parishes to keep up the tradition of a Fritillary Sunday,

tomorrow at Frimden in Suffolk, an open day for fritillary viewing will be held at Fox's Meadow, a five-acre site now owned by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. The meadow can be viewed throughout the flowering period, but on the open day refreshments are served and there is free parking. Fox's Meadow is named after a former owner, Quene Fox, who opened it for charity once a year, allowing anyone who paid a shilling to take home a bunch of flowers. Of course, a pick-your-own fritillary field would be environmentally unacceptable today; you now can simply look and to marvel.

Where to see fritillaries: Magdalen Meadow, beside Magdalen College, Oxford; tomorrow during Fritillary Sunday at Ducklington, six miles west of Oxford; at Fox Fritillary Meadow on open day, 27 April; at Boundary Farm, Frampton, near Dunchurch, in Suffolk (Suffolk Wildlife Trust also owns other *Nature reserves*, where fritillaries bloom; details, 01473 890189); North Meadow at Cricklade, halfway between Swindon and Chippenham – the best fritillaries in the far east.

Patricia Cleveland-Peck

1250 من الأصل

Gardens: It's the season for private plots to be opened to the public. Anna Pavord visits three creations

T. clusiana var *chrysantha* has golden yellow flowers, the outsides of its petals stained red or purple brown. It is an easier thing to bring into flower, but hasn't

Tulips from everywhere: since the Forties, Stanley Killingback's garden, barely 80ft long, has seen about 400,000 bulbs

PHOTOS: TONY BLACKINGHAM

I observed that, growing tulips for so long in the same place, Mr Killingback had been lucky to avoid tulip fire, a debilitating disease that withers foliage and stunts flowers. He looked at me

promising attitude to life: you get out of it precisely what you put in. He has put a lot into his garden, which is also open tomorrow. This is a big garden, about six acres, laid out round a handsome, early-18th-century brick house, with a rather strange, tall tower added at the beginning of this century by a South African

"Well," he says, "if it isn't fun, there's no point in doing it, is there?"

Lincolnshire is a vast county and a surprising one. It must have boomed in the 18th century, for several relatively small places, such as Folkingham, have splendid and elegant assembly rooms.

Folkingham is a big surprise, set on the slope of a hill – yes, a hill – where the road opens out into a generous green. It is dominated by the Greyhound Hotel at the top, made of Georgian brick, with the grand assembly room, lit

The Cambridge Botanic Garden, Baine-man Street, Cambridge, is open daily, 10am-6pm, admission £1.50. The other three gardens are open for one afternoon only this year. Stanley Killingsback's garden at 16 Hillcrest Road, London E18, is open tomorrow, 2pm-6pm, admission £1. George Adams's garden at Pinchbeck Hall, Pinchbeck, is open tomorrow, 2pm-5pm, admission £1. The Gibbons's garden at Holton-le-Moor Hall, Holton-le-Moor, is open tomorrow, 2pm-5.30pm, admission £1.50.

CUTTINGS

The Alpine Garden Society's North of England group has a big show at the Great Yorkshire Showground, Harrogate, this weekend. *Saxifrages*, *lewisias*, *cyclamen*, *primulas*, dwarf *rhododendrons* and *pleione* orchids will all be on display. Open today, 9.30am-6pm, admission £7.50, and tomorrow, 9.30am-4.30pm, admission £6. The Ulster group of the AGS is also holding a show today, 1pm-4pm, at Greenmount Agricultural and Horticultural College, Muckamore, Co Antrim. Admission £1.

The swoony heat over Easter and just after was followed by nights of finger-aching cold. Rogue potatoes that never got lifted last year, and are already gaily sprouting grown up around, got a little shock in our garden. I've reached for the Agralan mail order catalogue to increase the fleece cover of the vegetable patch. The stuff they call Envirofleece Plus costs £9.99 for a piece 2.6 metres by 7 metres. To protect newly planted or tender shrubs, you probably need the slightly heavier grade Envirofleece 30, which costs £8.99 for a piece 2.4 metres by 5 metres. Tip-pigs to hold down fleeces cost £3.15 for a pack of eight. You can get the mail-order catalogue from Agralan, The Old Brickyard, Ashton Keynes, Swindon, Wilts SN6 6QR (01285 860015).

Weekend work

Heathers can be trimmed over now to remove old flower growths. Take care not to cut back into old wood. Layering is a painless way to propagate heathers. Scoop out a series of shallow howls in the earth around the plant and fill them with sandy compost. Peg the branches down in this mixture, using bent wire or stones.

Books in the running brooks

Where learning is a breath of fresh air. By Sally Staples

It is unlikely, however, that many schools will offer the variety found at Coombes Infant School, just outside Reading in Berkshire. Here, under the guidance of head-teacher Sue Humphries, boys and girls are used to learning outside, and their every activity will be related to maths, science, geography, biology, music or botany.

clipboards and learning about compass points; in a corner of the playing field more youngsters were making patterns with dandelions, using the inspiration of real paintings. Others made and measured a daisy chain to exactly half a metre, so they could measure out half of the dandelion

ing a brick wall. "The children have seen building going on in school, and it's so important to relate what they do, to what they see going on round them," she said.


Another group was making music with sticks by beating the ground in regular rhythms. This, Sue explained, was to do

"When their school grounds are used and developed in the right way, bullying, vandalism and accidents are reduced and pupils' attitude and behaviour are improved," he added.

The charity has been backed this year by Esso UK, which

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Deep down it was scary

Days out: The Allan family visits the Black Country Museum. By Catherine Stebbings

The redundant pit frame of Racecourse Colliery perches on a hill surrounded by rusted carts, tracks, coal and an abandoned slag heap. It might seem a place of quiet desolation but below the ground there is a hive of activity. Here you can get an all-too-real taste of life in the maze of cramped tunnels as you take an underground tour of the 1850s coalmine. At the Black Country Museum in Dudley, West Midlands, you learn how they extracted the Staffordshire thick coal, and you also find out a great deal about the social past of this mining area. Above ground, you can board a tramcar that runs down the hill past a supervisor's cottage - which leans precariously as a result of the subsidence caused by the tunnelling below. It rattles on past a toll house and worker's cottage to a colourful fairground complete with helter-skelter, coconut shy and impressive 1930s ark.

Beyond the fair is a mining village - or at least a reconstructed one, complete with sweet shop, hardware store, haberdashery, chemist, Methodist chapel, inn and a 1920s cinema. Staff done up in traditional costume serve in the shops and are on hand to answer questions. Brightly painted boats line the canal nearby, the waterways having once played a vital part in the transport of coal. A few boats glide off into the Dudley tunnel canal for visitors who want to see the caverns there.

The visitors

Sue Allan, a nurse, took her children, Lauren, 10, Tim, 8, and Josie, 6.

Lauren: The Black Country Museum was brilliant. It was like going back in time, seeing the mine, the colliery, the houses and the shops just as they would have been in the 19th century. I've never been anywhere like it. I learned a



Hung-up on the 19th century: the Allan family outside the general store

lot about the way the people lived. I don't think they earned very much. The houses seemed quite small, and just had rugs on the floor, little furniture, and the loos were outside in the garden shed.

I enjoyed the cinema, where we saw an old Charlie Chaplin film. It was not very comfy - we had to sit on wooden benches - and the film was very shaky, black and white, and no talking - just music. It was quite funny.

Tim: The first part of the museum is all to do with mining. There are lots of tracks and carts, the colliery

and the mine itself. The best bit was the mine. I wouldn't have liked to have worked down there. It was cold, wet, dark, very dangerous and not very well paid. Often the miners were paid in tokens which they could only use in certain shops - and these usually belonged to the mine-owners, so things were expensive. Miners had a hard life.

We went down to the village on the tram and there I got a good idea about life in the 19th century. I liked the hardware store, which had baths like big tubs, ropes, brushes and beetle-traps which caught cockroaches in the night.

Josie: I really enjoyed the village and best of all the fairground, which was like an old travelling fair. There were swinging boats, a mirror place, a wobbly thing you had to walk along and a helter skelter which looked really old.

In the village the lady in the sweetshop made banana sweets, which weren't exactly delicious but quite nice. In the chemist we saw some scales where you paid a shilling and weighed your baby.

Down the mine there was a pretend explosion, which made the ground tremble under our feet. I found the area outside the mine a

bit boring because there were lots of big machines, piles of coal, and I didn't really understand how it all worked.

Sue: It was easy to wander round at your own pace, and there was enough to keep everyone's interest all day. The mine experience was just right, the children were not scared, but we could all see how grim it must have been.

The staff were down-to-earth, local and well-informed, and the shopkeepers were keen to discuss where the original buildings had been and what the owners had

been like, giving us a very local connection. The lady in the chemist, Gee's, told us that when the shop was being re-erected here they asked Mr Gee's daughter-in-law to show them where he had kept his stores. In the hardware shop the man talked to the children about prices, how they compared to wages and what people spent their money on. He had a kettle on sale for 10 shillings, a shopkeeper's weekly wage. He explained that it may seem a lot but the kettle would last forever.

The staff were helpful but there were not enough of them to give the place the feeling of a true mining community. We didn't do much on the canal, and while it was such an essential part of the whole set-up there was not a lot of information down there or people to ask about it. This may be better on a brighter day.

The deal

Getting there: The Black Country Museum, Tipton Road, Dudley, West Midlands DY1 4SQ (0121 557 9643), is well signposted from Junction 2 of the M5 and lies on the A4037 just off the A4123. By train: Tipton station is on the Birmingham to Wolverhampton line. Buses to the museum run from Owen Street by the station. Opening times: daily 10am-5pm from 1 March-31 October. Wed-Sun 10am-4pm November-February.

Admission: Adults £6.95, OAPs £5.95, children (5-17) £4.50, family ticket (2 adults, 3 children) £19.50. Extras - canal trips last about 40 minutes, adults £3.50, children £2.

Toilets: Good facilities around the site.

Access: Good free parking on site. Access around the museum is on foot but there is a free tram operating between the entrance and the village. Disabled access to most of the site, including the underground mine tour. Some buildings are too small for wheelchairs.

Are we nearly there?

Losing battles for kids - a round-up of mazes

Kent's Hever Castle, near Edenbridge, Kent TN8 7NG (01732 865224) Don't start with the maze, or you may miss the Italian garden, sculpture, cascades and fountains that decorate the childhood home of Anne Boleyn. Open daily, 11am-6pm. Admission £4.90/£3.90.

Hampton Court Palace, Surrey KT8 9AU (0181-781 9500) A third of a million visitors each year have left this most famous maze looking slightly rory. It may have to be cut down and replaced later in the year, so see William of Orange's puzzle now. Open Tue-Sun 9.30am-6pm; Mon 10.15am-6pm. Admission £5.60-£3.50, under-fives free.

Jubilee Park, Symonds Yat, Hereford HR9 6DA (01600 890011) The Museum of Mazes and the Jubilee Maze were erected here in the year of the Queen's Jubilee. Men are a bit of a lost cause; they "only rescue ladies". Open daily, 11am-5pm. Admission £2.80/£1.50.

Woolley Hole Caves and Papermill, Wells, Somerset BA5 1BB (01749-672243) The legendary home of the Witch of Woolley has various exhibits - including the chance to make one of yourself in the Magical Mirror Maze. Open daily, 9.30am-5.30pm. Admission £6.50/£3.50.

Chatsworth House, Chatsworth, Bakewell, Derbyshire DE45 1PP (01246 582204) The yew maze was planted by the present Duke and Duchess of Devonshire in 1962 on the site of Paxton's Great Stew, a vast greenhouse blown-up as a result of fuel shortages in WWI. Open daily, 11am-4.30pm. Admission £5.90/£3.

Blenheim Palace, Woodstock, Oxford OX20 1PX (01993 811325) The playful home of the 11th Duke of Marlborough has the largest hedge maze in the world, putting-greens, giant chess and inflatable castles. If you need to shake off the parents there's the Churchill exhibition, shops and the lake. Open daily, 9am-5pm. Admission £3.80/£1.80.

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TAKE NOTICE that Nigel John Allen of 13 Weston Lodge, Portsmouth Road, Thames Ditton, Surrey, having for the past six months carried on the trade of calling of Arms Managers intends to apply to the Licensing Sessions for the said Division to be held at the Court House, Mill Lane, Newbury on Monday the 12th day of May 1997 at 10.00am for the grant of a licence of a Justice's Licence authorising him to sell by retail intoxicating liquor of all descriptions for consumption on the premises to be situated at and to be known as Wine Cellar (such parts of the premises comprising the Cellar latched in red on the plan deposited with the Clerk to the Licensing Justices and enclosing the Off Licence area at 6 Brook House (formerly known as 60 Northbrook Street), Newbury, Berks. Given under our hands this 18th day of April 1997.
Primmer & Co
Solicitors
154 Fleet Street
London EC4A 3DQ
Solicitors and Authorised Agents for and on behalf of the said Applicants.

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The key to khaki

Khaki is the modern urbanite's battledress. Melanie Rickey reports from the war zone

The buses of London are currently being used in a battle of the khaki giants. Calvin Klein's slouching, asexual boys are pouting and posing with Kate Moss at Piccadilly Circus as the "Every khaki only Gap" advert swooshes past them and up Regent Street on the side of a number 73 bus. Khaki is a big fashion story for this summer (despite having been a wardrobe staple for years) and is the only classic that comes anywhere near denim in popularity. Today it is omnipresent, thanks to the huge sums the Gap, Calvin Klein and of course, Levi's, with its best-selling Dockers brand, are pumping into their advertising (have you seen the man ironing his bacon sandwich in the Dockers ad yet?).

Khakis, or, as they call them in America (much to the amusement of the English) "kackees", have traditionally been known as chino trousers, be they flat-fronted, pleated, wide or slim, with or without turn-ups and made of pure

cotton. However, "khaki" was the Gujarati word for a mud-coloured cloth - from *khak*, the Persian word for "dust" - and is one of many English words taken from our time in India (others are shampoo, bungalow, pyjama and jodhpurs). Khaki trousers were first worn by British soldiers in India during the 1882 Egyptian campaign. Their modern descendants have merged, via the Boer War and the two World Wars, with American chinos, and are now the trousers of choice for millions of American men who dress as they please at work on Fridays.

The "muffin" days, or casual Fridays, were introduced in the Eighties when Levi Strauss was approached by white-collar firms eager to encourage their employees to relax office dress codes. Dockers were brought in, and they sponsored a whole series of "how to" books on dressing down. Dockers are now the number one brand in America: two out of three men own at least two pairs, and their most popular colour is - you guessed it - khaki. Since Dockers were launched here in 1995, they have managed to dent Gap's superior market position; they sold 1.1 million pairs across Europe last year, more than doubling 1995's figures.

Gap launched their khakis in 1985 on the back of Dockers' US success; their aim was to make the trousers as accessible and universal as jeans, and it has worked. Gap has three basic styles for men: easy, relaxed, and slim-fit, all with reinforced pockets, crotch and belt loops. There are four

women's styles: regular and slim. Dockers also have the largest size scale available: waists from 28in to 40in and inside leg from 30in to 36in. Apart from office bound

types, people who have never worn (and will never wear) a suit to work have begun to adopt khakis as a modern uniform. Klein's collection, which he calls "the modern urban uniform", is the khaki look repackaged: vaguely military in flavour, downbeat and very, very cool. The range features two basic trouser designs, a pleated front and the more up-to-date flat front for both sexes, with slim-cut hipsters aimed directly at women (see Kate Moss on the buses). There is even a "loose and easy" version for women; when worn they are supposed

to look as though borrowed from the boyfriend (it would be much cheaper to nick them from him, though). There are about khaki's, slim-fit shirts, shirt dresses and thick, ribbed vests and T-shirts which are bound to sell and sell.

As well as the Americans, British design labels and high-street stores have gone khaki crazy this spring. See French Connection for reasonably priced cotton/Lycra boot-cut hipsters for girls, and flat-fronted, slim-cut trousers for

Catwalk pic: Margaret Howell silk/linen suit, trousers £155, shirt, £155, jacket, £355, available from Margaret Howell, 24 Brook Street;

29 Beauchamp Place, SW3; 9 Old Red Lion Court, Stratford Upon Avon; 7 Paved Court, Richmond and Liberty, Regent Street London, W1.

Dockers khaki's (above) cost from £35, and are available from Selfridges, Oxford Street, London W1; Capolito Roma, The Marlborough Centre,

Southampton; Fenwick's of Tunbridge Wells, Kent and Royal Victoria Place and The Dockers Store, Lakeside Shopping Centre Thurrock, Essex.



Calvin Klein Khaki

OK Khaki's - from £85 for men and women's styles. For your local stockist call 0171-259 6011

Gap Khaki's cost from £34 for men's and women's styles. For your local stockist call freephone, 0800 427789

Special offer
Dockers have kindly offered to send a pair of khaki shorts to the first 20 readers who send a postcard with their waist size to: Independent/Dockers Offer, FAO Michelle Baker, Level 1&2, D'Arby House, 10a Poland Street, London W1V 3DE.

boys. FCUK have also included coordinating little vests and jackets. People Corporation and Copperwheat Blundell have put the trousers into their collections, worn low-slung, loose and baggy. But female designers such as Nicole Farhi and Margaret Howell, whose silk/linen suit (pictured) is the embodiment of cool, are doing dressier khaki suits for women - still worn in a similar way to the men, but with a serious dose of effortless chic thrown in.

Postscript: One of the most commonly asked questions about khaki is to do with its colour. Many think it is a sludgy olive green, or Army green, others an off-white, sandy colour. To put the record straight, according to the Concise Oxford Dictionary it is "a dull, brownish yellow", which doesn't sound too attractive, but means that any shade, as long as it's a mixture of brown and yellow, is khaki.

The world according to fair trading

Third World producers are starting to get a fairer deal, says Meg Carter

Like is the latest in a growing line of companies eager to be seen to be standing up for workers' rights in Third World countries. Last week the sportsware giant was reported to have signed a code of conduct on employee practices around the world. Closer to home, British supermarkets are attempting to do the same. But for the consumer with a conscience, shopping ethically is not as simple as it sounds. "Fair trading" is the term widely used to describe buying and selling products made by people working in decent conditions, and paid a fair wage. It is the idea behind the Fairtrade Foundation (FF) which, with the backing of voluntary organisations including Christian Aid, has developed the Fairtrade mark - an endorsement guaranteeing that Third World production of an item has met certain ethical standards, has been systematically checked and is regularly monitored.

So far, there are only a handful of Fairtrade products available in the UK. The best known are Café Direct coffee, Clipper tea and Maya Gold chocolate. The reason is the investment needed properly to research and source the products, explains Phil Wells, director of Fairtrade Foundation. "Before a Fairtrade product can be launched, we need to form effective partnerships with local farmers; this takes time. It is impossible to apply the same

standards for different products made by different processes in different countries." In spite of this, support for fair trading is growing. Last month, the Shadow overseas development minister, Clare Short, launched an ethics charter, calling for "ethical purchasing which guarantees decent employment and environmental conditions". Meanwhile, most of the major supermarkets now stock Fairtrade goods. And shoppers are demanding ever more information about the products they buy, says Andrew Simms, communications manager at Christian Aid, which is campaigning for a supermarket charter for the Third World. "When the food on your dinner table was growing in Kenya or South America just 24 hours before, perceptions of where home begins and ends inevitably change," he says. Small wonder, then, if supermarkets are now working to develop their own fair trade codes of conduct for dealing with suppliers. The reason is simple, according to Sainsbury's technical manager Dr Petrina Fridd: "We are responding to public demand."

Sainsbury has been working with Fairtrade Foundation for the past 18 months. It has developed a pilot study involving a detailed survey of production methods for four own-brand products: flowers in Kenya, tea in India, babywearing and electrical goods in China. A survey has been conducted in each country and responses are now being analysed. The results will be used to prepare a draft code of conduct which the company hopes to introduce at 5,000 supplier sites early next year. Meanwhile, Tesco last month announced plans to launch a 70-strong team of ethical advisers to monitor foodstuffs and other products. The company has been working on its own code with Christian Aid since last October, and will soon take part in a pilot study to assess what it needs to measure - and how - to shape its own definition of fair

trade. Other chains, including Safeway, insist that ethical trading is now "high on the agenda". Good news for Third World producers? Maybe. But a number of worries remain. One area of contention is the monitoring procedures required for an ethical code of practice. With different chains developing different strategies, there are calls to set up an independent body to oversee all ethical codes. "There is still no effective way of checking these codes," says Maggie Burns, of the Catholic Institute for International Relations, which is monitoring developments. Then there's the matter of just how the supermarket chains will use their fair trade products. "It's a double-edged sword," Mr Wells believes. "While supermarkets' own fairly traded products can only promote the fair trade movement, it may also lead to them stocking their goods instead of Fairtrade ones." Communication is yet another issue. "Interest in developing codes so far has been great, but some strategies have been at best wishful thinking, at worse PR," Ms Burns says. "Lack of information is a problem. Companies are not yet willing to say 'our policy is this, or that'."

Labelling is seen by many as the inevitable end result, but this raises other worries. In order to work, a label must be understood and trusted. Rival fair trade claims could confuse - as has already happened in the "green" arena. Many environmentally friendly claims are now seen by shoppers as "misleading, meaningless or even downright dishonest", a National Consumer Council report recently revealed. As a result, many people have given up trying to buy "green" altogether. One way to overcome this will be closer co-operation between rival chains and interested parties such as the Fairtrade Foundation. So far, however, only Sainsbury and the Co-op have publicly endorsed Fairtrade Foundation's aim to develop an international code. "The supermarkets are extremely competitive and there are tensions between larger and smaller groups," Mr Simms observes. "There is definitely a 'first best' drive amongst larger chains, which are investing resources in developing it and might be reluctant to see smaller chains cashing in."

Which is why Mr Wells is now encouraging household brand names, such as Premium Beverages, to join the cause. Last month Premium, owner of Typhoo tea, signed up to Fairtrade's independent monitoring scheme. "People don't want to buy a fair trade product instead of a better quality household brand," he explains. "They want to know that all the goods they might want to buy have been responsibly produced."

The difference with rival drinks business Britvic's approach for Tango (remember the bald Orangeman slapping faces with a large, orange rubber hand?) is cult status. And here's the rub: Tango achieved it seemingly by not trying at all.

Meg Carter

A Life of Facts

How have you survived without this piece of useless info? Here is the breakdown of venues at which breakfast was eaten in three months up to September 1996

A hotel/guest house restaurant	23
A fast food outlet (e.g. McDonald's)	15
A train or ferry	13
A pub or bar	12
A cafe or coffee shop	12
A travel terminal	12
A sports/leisure centre	2
Have not eaten breakfast outside the home	14
Only eat breakfast at home	14
Don't know	2

Source: BMRB/Mintel





Gavin Green

A motoring organisation that hates motorists? That's right – the RAC's grown green

The RAC has dropped the crown from its logo, and the Queen is said to be pleased. It has also dropped motorists from its embrace and, although Her Majesty's view on this subject is unknown, all other car users should feel anything but pleased.

The RAC is moving with the times to be a 21st-century "mobility" organisation, pushing the interests of cyclists and public transport users as well as motorists – or so its New Labour-style all-things-to-all-people manifesto implies. "We favour travel over traffic, and mobility over motoring. Our members want help and advice in all aspects of mobility – that is the future of the RAC," said chief executive Neil Johnson at last week's press launch. Johnson, who looks and talks like a politician, fended off questions from environment and motoring writers with equally skilled non-answers.

Quizzed by one environment correspondent on what the RAC was actually going to do to promulgate the appeal of non-car transport, he proffered the new RAC pushbike, yours for a mere £647. When another writer pointed out that the bike had neither lights nor a bell, Johnson came close to being fazed. But not quite. Appropriately, the bike is engineered by Dr Alex Moulton, car engineer turned pushbike maker.

While the RAC's policies are changing, so are its vans. The handsome white, blue and silver liveried breakdown machines are to be replaced by Dayco-orange coloured vehicles, which look like Dyno-rod vans. The monarchical Knights of the Road are to be replaced by Republicans with a Rod, or so you'd think.

Of course, part of me welcomes the RAC's arrival into the Nineties, and its belief in "integrated transport policies". Most of us realised years ago that a roads-only transport policy is a road to nowhere. Now even the RAC is jumping on the enviro-bandwagon. This is an organisation, bear in mind, which has traditionally shown itself to be about as in touch with everyday issues as Bertie Wooster. It has historically resisted speed limits, the breathalyzer and the compulsory wearing of seatbelts, and still forbids women from becoming full members of its Pall Mall club, even though its recent Knights of the Road ads were aimed at females.

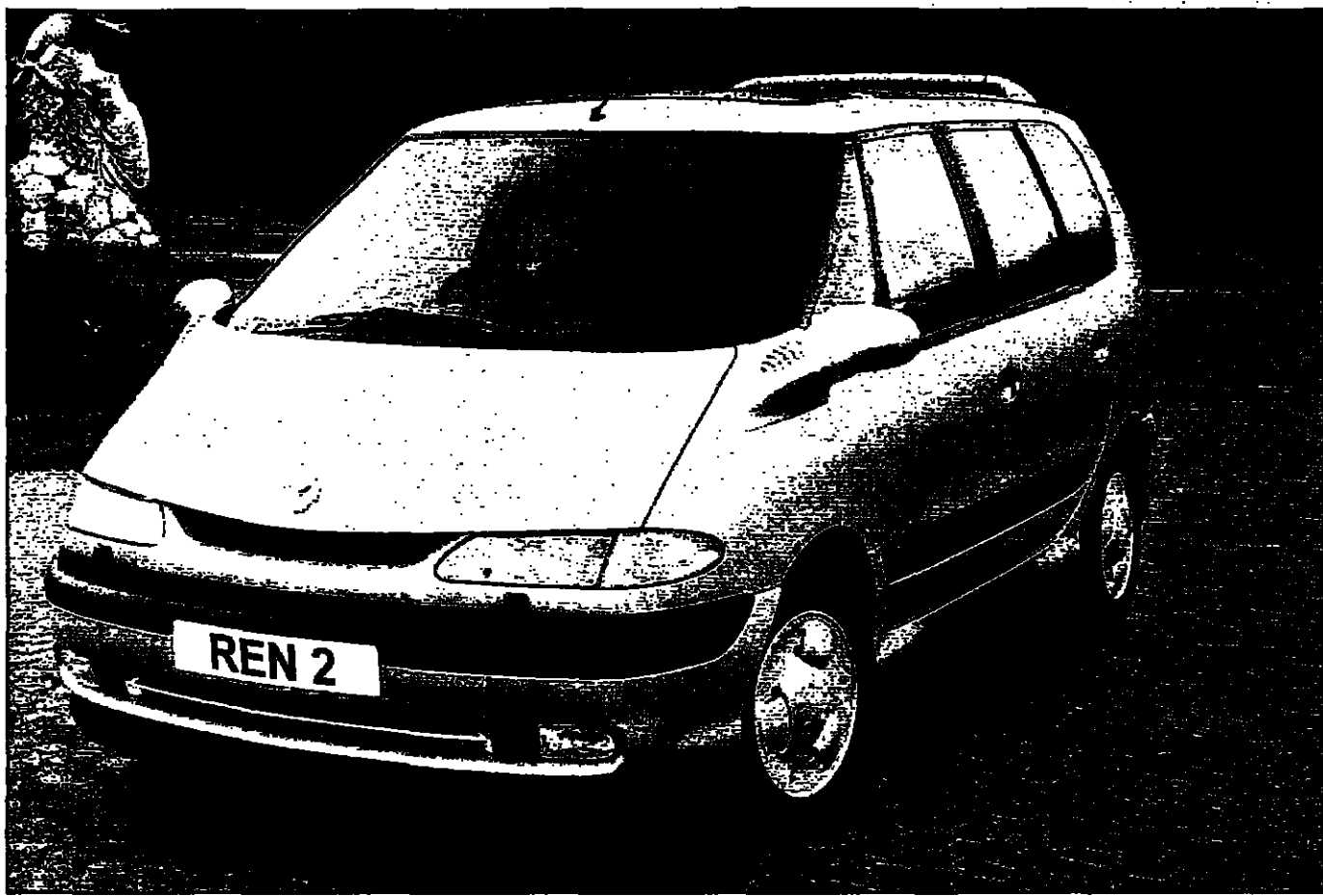
But is it right or appropriate for a motoring organisation to get all green and cuddly and pretend to have a balanced and enlightened view of integrated transport? Surely it should accept that its primary duty is to speak on behalf of its 6 million motoring members and, de facto, the nation's motorists. If you want an intelligent pro-car view, you talk to the RAC. Just as if you want an informed pro-environment view, you talk to the Friends of the Earth. Nobody expects the Friends of the Earth to have a balanced view on transport, any more than you'd expect the TUC to argue on behalf of both employers and employees.

Myriad bits of legislation are imminent which will profoundly affect motorists. Extra road tax, extra insurance costs, motorway tolls, tighter speed limits, smartcards to bill those entering cities, more expensive parking tickets, escalating costs to squeeze the impecunious off the road – the RAC has a responsibility to talk on behalf of Britain's motorists on these great issues, and argue their case.

An organisation that runs silly pseudo-intellectual TV ads featuring academics and technologists and environmentalists – they began broadcasting last Sunday as part of a £4m PR campaign – and which tries to sell overpriced pushbikes as proof of its green credentials, is an organisation starting to get dangerously out of touch with its members and with everyday motorists. Car drivers need lobbying champions, just like any other major group. (And there aren't many larger groups than motorists, nor many clouded harder by the tax man.) With the national mood becoming increasingly and often irrationally anti-car, so the need for a strong, independent voice becomes greater.

The RAC should fulfil this role. Yet it is on the verge of failing motorists. Some would say it has already done so. If it does fail drivers, so its whole *raison d'être* comes into question. A "mobility organisation" doesn't seem to have much purpose in life.

Iron hand, velvet glove



ROAD TEST Renault Espace

By Roger Bell

On the outside, it's soft and malleable, on the inside impenetrably hard. No, not a hazelnut cream but Renault's new Espace, skinned with dent-resistant plastic bodywork over a galvanised steel shell. Put the boot in and the composite panels spring back into place, unmarked.

Kick-proof flanks are among several classic features claimed for the Espace by Renault, pioneers of the monospace MPV, or people carrier. The original 1984 Espace – the great mould-breaking car of its time – was always going to be a hard act to follow. That Renault has topped it with a successor of amazing versatility confirms that Gallic flair is still alive and well.

Other novelties you'll not find in any close rival include cavernous door and dashboard storage, slimline digital instruments, individual left/right heater controls, two rear openings (tailgate or hinged window), pre-tensioners on six seat belts, and railed rear seats that can be positioned as you want them (or removed altogether). Cars don't come much funkier than this.

Other than in size and concept, the new Espace owes very little to the old: the engine, for instance, is no longer set longitudinally, but slung across the nose to save space. Unlike some rivals, Renault has not tried to make its family seven-seater feel like an ordinary car from the driver's seat. Far from it. You sit a long way back, separated from the distant screen by a vast expanse of dashboard plastic. To reach the air vents, you have to lean so far forward that your head brushes the wheel.

Even the heating/venting controls are beyond arm's length. Speed is indicated by

a central digital display that is far to the left of your normal sightline.

The explanation for these and other ergonomic anomalies is simple: packaging. Renault has sacrificed convention, even convenience, in its unbridled quest for space to stow (and lose) the paraphernalia of family motoring.

Renault Espace RXE turbodiesel

Specifications

Engine: 2,188cc, four cylinders, 12 valves, 115bhp at 4,500rpm; five-speed manual gearbox, front-wheel drive. Performance: top speed 109mph, 0-60mph in 14.2 seconds. Fuel consumption 35.3mpg.

Rivals

Ford Galaxy 1.9td Ghia, £23,435 More conventional, less innovative and versatile than the Espace – but still the most car-like MPV you can get. Cloned with the VW Sharan and Seat Alhambra. Good to drive, classy styling. 2.8 petrol. Ghia pick of the range. **Peugeot 806 1.9td SV**, £23,640. Versatile, roomy cabin and seating, drives and handles well. Van-like in appearance, lacks design flair. Said by Renault to depreciate in value faster than the Espace. Cloned with Citroën Synergie.

Toyota Previa 2.4 GL, £23,819. Petrol-only. Prolia with out-of-sight under-floor engine, strong on performance, accommodation and build quality. Ovoid shape too *Thunderbirds* for some tastes. Holds value pretty well. Has no clones.

Weird though it feels at first, the far-back driving position is different rather than bad. Lofly (and very comfortable) seating that affords a panoramic view through big, slim-pillared windows helps to overcome any initial feeling of awkwardness. So do rear headrests that can be retracted to clear the view aft (head-rest obstruction is a major problem when reversing, in some other MPVs). There's nothing van-like about the ride, steering or cornering powers of the new Espace. Dynamically, the new Laguna-suspended model holds its own against the best MPV opposition.

A decade on from its launch in 1984, the old Espace was still the best-selling MPV in Britain. Since then, sales have declined as rivals – notably the Ford Galaxy/VW Sharan twins have proliferated. Renault has not so much conceded defeat as bowed to pragmatism: the new Espace cannot compete on volume so it's being aimed at affluent buyers seeking "the most original and innovative MPV available".

Nearly half the 2,200 Espaces Renault expects to sell this year will be manual turbodiesels. With an average consumption of more than 35mpg, these 12-valve oil-burners are much more economical than the alternative 2.0 and 3.0 V6 petrol automatics. Better security has resulted in lower insurance costs, too, says Renault. If the new Espace inherits the old one's low depreciation, strong resale values will also remain a major selling point.

Prices range from £18,995 for the 115bhp 2.0 RT to £26,695 for the 3.0 V6 auto RXE. Even with the cheapest RT trim you get two airbags, electric mirrors/windows/central locking, and six-speaker, thief-proof hi-fi. Air-conditioning, anti-lock brakes and a CD player are included on the RT-XS.



David Cronenberg, director of the controversial film 'Crash', talks about his enthusiasm for cars and racing

I've just finished a script. It's called *Red Cars*. I don't know whether it will be my next movie or not. It's about the Formula One Championship of 1961, which was won by Phil Hill, the first American to win the championship. He won it for Ferrari when his teammate Wolfgang von Tripps was killed at Monza. It's really about creative dynasties, about fathers and sons, and it's about car racing. Enzo Ferrari is a major figure in the script. So it's quite a different thing from my movie *Crash*. It would be interesting to play them on a double bill. They're almost like two sides of a coin.

I'm a vintage racer myself. I race old cars from the Fifties and early Sixties in events for old guys who couldn't afford those cars when they were younger. I am certainly a car enthusiast, but *Crash* is not made out of that part of me. The only part of the movie that came out of my car-enthusiasm side was when I was working with the stuntmen.

Have I ever been involved in crashes myself? Yes, I have scars on my back from motorcycle crashes. And I have been in crashes in race cars. But a crash in a race car is a completely different thing. You're wearing a fire suit and a helmet. You've got a six-point harness. And everybody else on the track is a racer. There are fire marshals with fire extinguishers at the corner. There are no cars coming the other way because you're all going the same direction.

It's very unlike a serious traffic accident, which I have never had. But it all adds to your understanding and curiosity about velocity and impact, and I mean that emotionally as well as physically. I've never had the kind of crashes portrayed in the movie.

But one of the reasons for making the movie was to come to an understanding of what that can mean, what it can be like. Making the movie was my way of exploring those phenomena, including the one we all know of people slowing down to look at a traffic accident.

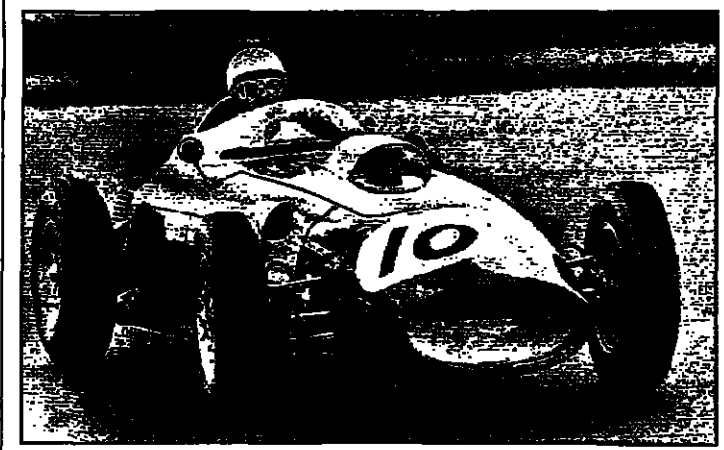
Everybody does it. Everybody denies it or feels guilty about it. One of the amazing things that happened when I first met I G Ballard, who wrote the book on which the movie is based, was that we had this instantaneous understanding of each other's art, even though we come from very different backgrounds. I felt when I read *Crash* that it was taking place in a strange phantom North America rather than in Britain – the cars he described were not Ford Anglias. They were 58 Buicks. That's what they felt like when he talked about the chrome and grilles.

North America looms very large in Ballard's imagination. It represents many things for him which are perhaps unfashionable. It represents freedom and expansiveness and generosity and open spaces. When I read the book I thought of Toronto. That felt to me like where the book was happening, even though he does mention very specific roads and motorways near London. Ballard felt the same. He felt that spiritually it was not happening in London.

One of the things in the book I dispensed with was the Elizabeth Taylor element. Twenty five years ago, when Ballard was conceiving and writing the book, Taylor was a Hollywood icon. Now she's become an old lady who does AIDS benefits. That's what most audiences would know her for.

I replaced Taylor with the James Dean car crash, which is not in the book. He was safely dead as an icon, untouchable, and I felt that was much more useful to what I was doing in the movie – the idea that James Dean died of a broken neck and became immortal. How do you die and become immortal at the same time? That was what I wanted to ask. Since then, of course, I've moved on – to other heroes: Phil Hill, Wolfgang von Tripps, Enzo Ferrari, and to other pursuits: the challenge of the racing track.

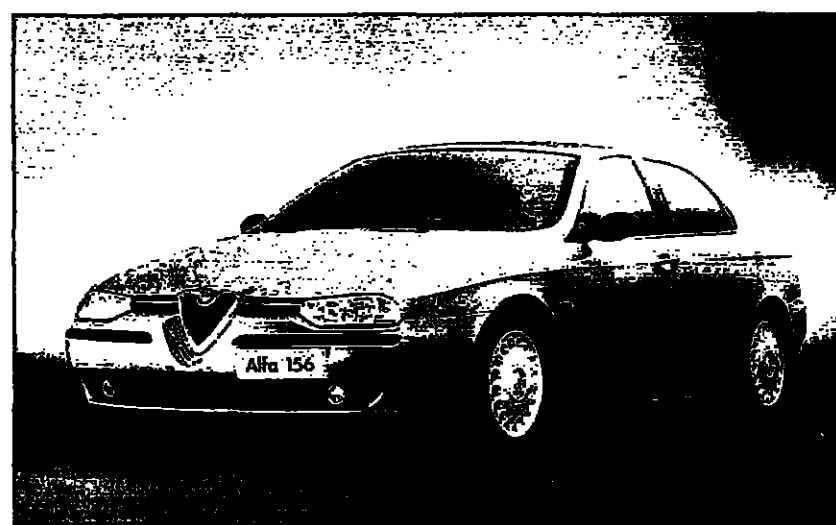
David Cronenberg was talking to Geoffrey Macnab



The winning formula of Phil Hill and Ferrari

HULTON GETTY

Alfa hopes to close up on Germans



ALFA ROMEO is gunning for the BMW 3-series and the Audi A4 with its new 156 model, just unveiled. European sales start in October. Sales in right-hand-drive markets, including Britain, begin in early 1998.

The car looks like being Alfa's best shot yet at tackling the Germans in the big-selling and profitable European luxury small-car market, currently dominated by Audi, BMW and Mercedes (with the C-class). The 156 is a curvaceous, sporty looking sedan that boasts three different, twin-cam, twin-spark four-cylinder engines (of 1.6, 1.8 and 2.0 capacities) and a 190bhp 2.5-litre V6. The latter engine also comes with a six-speed manual gearbox. There are also two different diesel engines, both using Fiat's new Unijet direct-injection system that

gives extra performance and economy. One curious styling detail is that the rear door handles are hidden in the C-pillars. This gives the 156 the look of a coupé. The front door handles are old-fashioned chrome affairs. Other retro details include the offset front number plate, borrowed from pre-war Alfa sports cars.

Alfa intends to build 150,000 156s a year, more than double the rate of the old 155, an unloved car. The 156, which is certain to be Alfa's best-selling model, can't come a moment too soon for the Italian company. European sales have been poor, despite the recent introduction of the 145 and 146 models. In 1996, sales in Europe stood at only 118,000. Back in 1990, sales were more than 200,000.

Gavin Green

motoring

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13 AA	3,850	GB 5887	3,000	JUL 1995	1,200	1320 NI	1,200
137 408	1,500	GBH 15Y	425	1 JCG	8,500	NC 1	22,500
136 ALX	1,350	GF 739	2,450	643 JKP	900	930 NT	1,950
136 ALX	1,350	GF 739	2,450	643 JKP	900	930 NT	1,950
136 ALX	1,350	GF 739	2,450	643 JKP	900	930 NT	1,950
136 ALX	1,350	GF 739	2,450	643 JKP	900	930 NT	1,950
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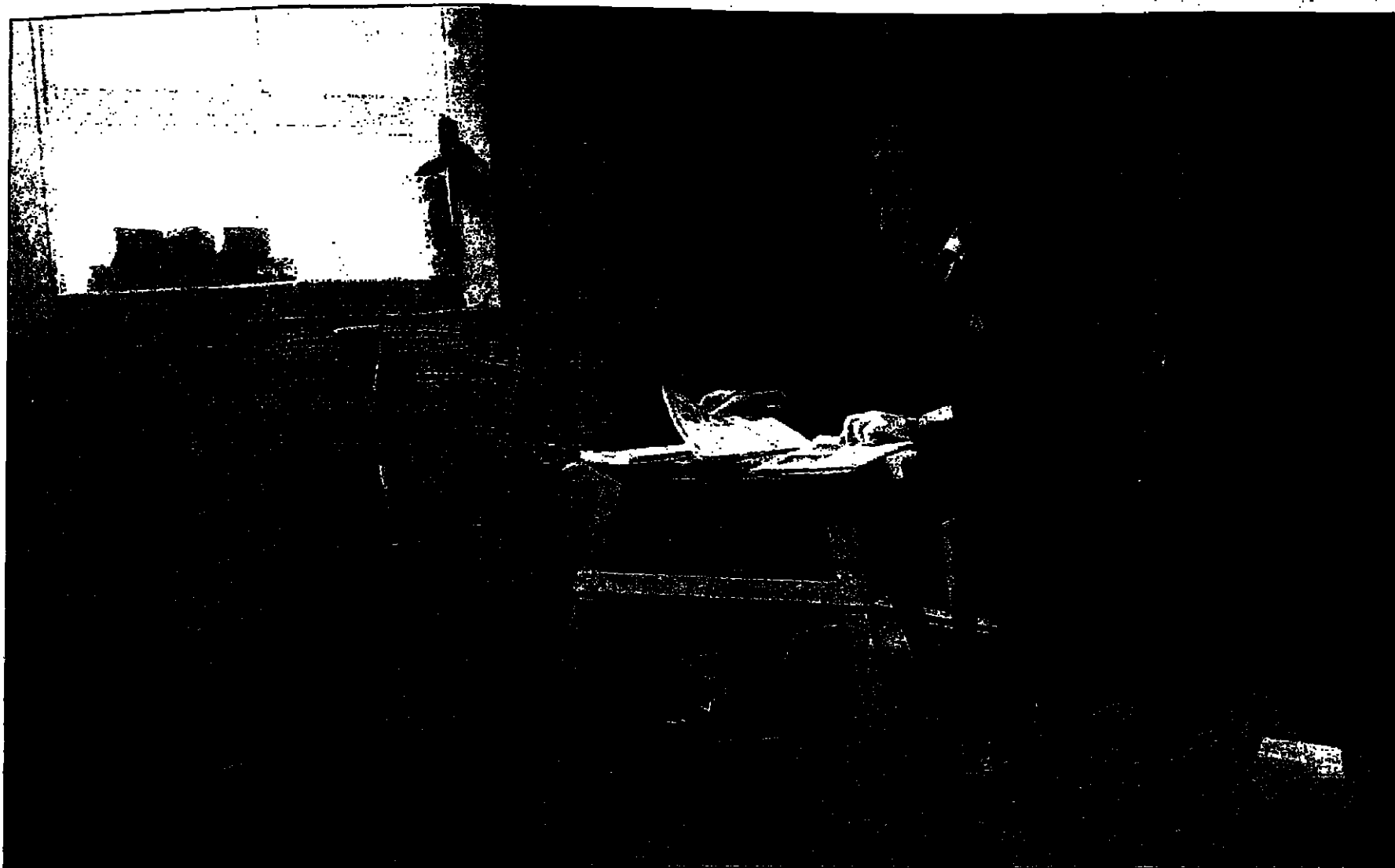
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House hunting, fee and easy

For 18 months Jeremy Williams, a freelance advertising account planner and his wife Anne Hyde, a freelance photographer, became increasingly frustrated house-hunters. "We were inundated with mail, wasted most weekends on wild goose chases, and our relationship became fractious," Mr Williams says. Finally they decided to pay someone else to find them a new home and they hired the services of County Homesearch.

The couple knew they were looking for a rarity - a rural property at around £100,000, within one-and-a-half hours of London - and indeed, it took another eight months to find the place they wanted. Bids were invited on the property, and a Homesearch agent, Douglas Fensome, advised them on what to offer. Last May, they became the owners of a two-bedroom lodge on a country estate in Buckinghamshire.

"Time was money for us," says Mr Williams. "It was a wonderful feeling to be able to let go of the reins, and we ended up with pretty much a perfect match to our brief."

Anyone who has ever braved the rigours of the property market will know how exhausting and demoralising the search for a house can be. There are so many criteria to satisfy, and so few hours in the day to make the necessary phone calls and trudge round homes on show - most of which are not going to fit the bill anyway.

With so little currently in the market-place, paying somebody else to do the searching, while knowing that you will be getting the best possible deal, is an attractive proposition. Property search companies, which sell themselves on taking the stress out of house-hunting, claim to have expert knowledge of the market-place, and are confident of being able to get a better price for a property than the client would acting alone.

Typically, when clients approach a search company, an agent will come and see them face-to-face to get a feel for exactly what they are looking for, and within what price range. Once it has been established that the company can work productively for the client, a contract is drawn up and an initial fee levied. The idea is to ensure that the client is serious, but the amount paid is sometimes deductible from the final fee.

Estate agents are keen to deal with search companies because they know the buyer being represented is serious, and that good relationship means that firms often get wind of properties before they go on the market. The firm then takes the client to the very best places it has seen, giving advice and pointing out pitfalls, and when the client has made a decision, the condition of the property is assessed. The final fee charged to the client for the service is usually between 1 and 2.5 per cent of the purchase price.

One of the most established search organisations is Property Vision, which has been finding homes in the country for the time-

starved buyer since 1983, and in London since 1989. Says director Charles Ellingworth: "Fifteen years ago, we did research which showed that people wanted advice that they just weren't getting from estate agents. Estate agents are acting in the interests of the seller, not the buyer, and we found that purchasers were prepared to pay someone to act on their behalf."

Property Vision will seek out properties starting at £400,000 in the country, and at £250,000 in London, with London property now constituting around two-thirds of its business. With a registration fee of £1,500 in London (£2,500 in the country), and a final fee of 2.5 per cent of the property's purchase price, Ellingworth admits Property Vision is more expensive than other buying agencies, but the initial charge is returnable against the final amount.

Stacks Relocation, which was set up in 1984 and now has 14 regional offices, charges a £300 retaining fee, returnable against a final fee of 1.5 per cent of the purchase price. Paul Greenwood, managing director, claims to save clients money "not necessarily from the asking price of a property, but from what would happen if they were left to their own devices".

County Homesearch, established seven years ago by Jonathan Haward, now has 23 offices country-wide, with offices in Singapore and Hong Kong serving expatriates returning to the UK. It will search for properties worth from £75,000 up to several million pounds, charging a registration fee of £350 to "sort the wheat from the chaff". The final fee is equivalent to either 1.5 per cent of the purchase price, or 15 per cent of the saving made on the asking price - whichever is the greater.

Some estate agents will also act for buyers, among them Savills in London. Johnny Turnbull, of its Knightsbridge office, says: "A client who's been looking unsuccessfully for, say, six months, might come to me and say 'We get on with you - will you help us keep looking?' I might then see a suitable place about to go on to the market, and if the client likes it I will try and get it at the best possible price for him." That, of course, constitutes something of a role reversal for the estate agent, whose job it is usually to make as lucrative a sale as possible, but agents do not usually ask for any money initially, and the final fee charged is only 1 per cent of the purchase price.

Meanwhile Jeremy Williams is in no doubt that using a search company gave good value for money. "What we saved on mileage," he says "we've been able to spend on making the house look exactly as we want it."

Property Vision: 0171 823 8388.
Stacks Relocation: 01666 860523.
County Homesearch: 01872 223349.
Association of Relocation Agents: 01273 624455.

Scott Hughes

Dirty work well done

A year ago, Josephine Seccombe, a management consultant, was devastated to learn that she had narrowly failed to buy a derelict Victorian house in Shacklewell, north London. The three-bedroom property was not much to look at - plaster falling off, rotten windows, collapsed ceilings, a damp cellar, once beautiful rooms partitioned, bricks missing. "You wouldn't have washed your hands in the bathroom, let alone done anything else," she recalls. But the house retained many original features - cornices, wooden shutters and double doors in the living room - hidden under strips of ply-board, as were the spindles of the mahogany banisters.

A London property developer had also spotted the potential, however, and outbid her. The usual story seemed set to unfold. House snapped up for £77,000 is tarted up for fast sale and developer walks off with fat profit, leaving a bodged job.

But Ms Seccombe was in luck. The developer, Martin Fitzgerald, doesn't conform to stereotype. Where you might expect a smooth charmer in a BMW, offering emollient smiles and a handshake loaded down by gold, what you get is a 50-year-old in a beaten-up red van with a load of timber on the roof rack and half a house in the back. Locals go so far as to say he is that rare commodity, an honest developer.

Indeed, such was Mr Fitzgerald's reputation that after viewing previous work, Ms Seccombe bought the dilapidated house from him within days of the original sale. But the price wasn't £77,000. She paid £120,000 for Mr Fitzgerald's promise to do his "usual job". Twelve weeks after she'd first seen the wreck, Ms Seccombe moved into a restored home, with replastered walls and ceilings, new sash windows, modern central heating, rewiring, and a new kitchen with French windows, created by knocking through an outside loo, a scullery and an old kitchen. "I could never have projected-managed the work so efficiently," says Ms Seccombe. "And it would have been much more difficult living here through the mess."

Property developers are not all cowboys, writes Jack O'Sullivan



Martin Fitzgerald (top picture): a rare commodity

PHOTO: NICOLA KURIZ

combe. "He appreciates these old houses, and his work reflects that."

So what is life like for that rare beast, a Nineties developer with a conscience? "We're making hay while the sun shines," says Mr Fitzgerald, who has seen prices rise by 30 per cent in two years. A recent sale tells the story. "I bought a three-bedroom place off the council last year for £98,500, expecting to spend my usual £30,000 on it and sell it for £145,000, leaving me with £16,500. We've just sold it for £160,000. On a rising market you make a bonus. The trouble is, you then have to pay more for the next derelict house you buy."

The late Eighties and early Nineties were rocky. "We made a lot of money up

to 1988 and then went on a curve downwards. The combination of falling prices, high interest rates and tax bills for the good years got us into trouble. We waited eight years for the recession to end." Though he avoided bankruptcy, there were dark days. At the top of the market in 1988 he owned, virtually outright, a huge, £350,000 Victorian detached house in Hertford. In 1992 debts forced him to sell a third of it off for £150,000 and remortgage, for £150,000, the four-bedroom remainder where he now lives with his wife and four children. "We dropped nearly 300 grand in the bad years. It was enough to make you a bit religious."

"A lot of people left the business and went into letting, where you do up a place and bring in tenants. But that ties up your cash. I like to be buying and selling. That way you can respond to the market quickly."

The turning-point for Mr Fitzgerald was when Britain left the European Exchange Rate Mechanism in 1992. "We decided to go for growth," he says. That means developing a dozen houses a year.

"I like to think of myself as a renovator and an organiser," he says, standing in the debris of a recent acquisition. It has been cleaned back to its plain Victorian brick and the back wall is missing. The job ahead is like transforming a mouthful of rotten, filthy molars into a set of beautiful milk teeth. But it's a task that is becoming increasingly urgent. According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, houses built today will have to last longer than the Pyramids or Stonehenge, given the rate of building new ones.

"I like to have six houses on the go - two or three identified for purchase, a couple being built, two or three being decorated."

Holidays, he says, are difficult to take. "In a recession you're worried about not doing enough work, and when things are going well, you don't want to miss out on the good times." But this year he expects to spend a fortnight in Florida. "The wife's booked it. She's told me I'd better be there."

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A year to live and money to spend

Life insurance has traditionally been taken out to provide dependents with some financial security when their loved ones die. But what if the policyholder is diagnosed with a terminal illness? It would be a comforting thought if we could offer someone the chance to live out their dreams in their last year of life.

Many terminally ill patients have problems coping with the expensive bills that often result from care and medical attention. To be able to receive some of the benefits of their life insurance policy when they need it could make what remains of their lives much easier in financial terms. And it can give them the chance to put their personal affairs in order before they die, or to fulfil long-held ambitions.

Brenda Ward and Tony Wright, featured on BBC2 recently, were in this situation. With Brenda being diagnosed as having only one year to live, they cashed in their life insurance policies and used the money to make the most of their remaining days together, travelling and buying luxuries.

Life Benefits Resources is one of the three UK companies most active in buying life insurance policies from those diagnosed with terminal illness. Known as a

Life insurance: People who are terminally ill can sell their policies, writes Marie Dyne

"viatical" settlement – taken from the word "viaticum", meaning Holy Communion given to a dying person – this process gives the policyholder a percentage of the sum assured, usually up to 80 per cent, in return for waiving all rights to further benefits from the policy.

The percentage paid varies according to the type of policy and the life expectancy of the holder. The buyer pays the monthly premiums to the insurer and, when the original policyholder dies, the buyer collects the entire sum assured.

The market began in the United States in the 1980s due to the onset of AIDS-related deaths. It acquired a controversial reputation due to the dubious methods used by some businesses, including the deliberately slow processing of applications to delay paying the policyholder.

The three companies most active

in this market in the UK are Life Benefits Resources, which began operating in 1992, International Viatical Settlements, operating since 1995, and Securitised Endowment Contracts.

Richard Legg, managing director of Life Benefits Resources, thought of the idea while working for a church charity. He says: "I was seeing people who were HIV-positive in their 20s to 30s with all the hopes and aspirations of anyone at that age and with no chance to do anything about them. I looked into the American market and I did not like what I saw."

"There are only two criteria for us buying a policy – that they have a valid policy that has value and that they have a terminal illness backed by the medical profession." Life Benefits Resources buys about 49 per cent of its policies from people with AIDS, 49 per cent from cancer victims and the other 2 per cent from people with other terminal illnesses.

The demand for the deals offered by these companies has highlighted a gap in the insurance market, one which life offices then rushed to fill by launching terminal illness insurance which pays out either at death or on diagnosis. Old critical illness policies



Dream boat: Some people who cash in their policies use the money to fulfil long-held ambitions such as travelling the world

tended to cover only certain specified illnesses, but the new policies applied regardless of the nature of the illness, as long as it was terminal and the policyholder had less than 12 months to live.

Paul Cowman, business development manager at Canada Life, said: "Insurers realised there was a need for a product that would offer cover for people who had a terminal illness."

Some terminal illness policies pay the total sum assured to the policyholder, but most pay 75 per cent, with the remaining 25 per cent being paid on death to beneficiaries nominated by the policyholder.

For further information, contact: Life Benefits Resources 0181 404 5626; International Viatical Settlements 0717 801 0887; Securitised Endowment Contracts 0181 207 1666.

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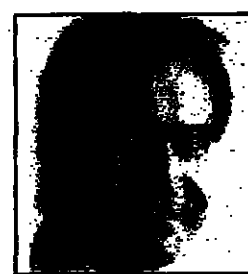
* Source: Maccop Ltd. buying price to selling price, from 1.3.91-17.3.97, the UK Stockmarket Fund grew by 120.7%* with income reinvested (an annualised growth rate of 14%*, 1%* discount on the buying price applies until 30.4.97)

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Nic Cicuti

With only a few more days to go before the election, this column should be addressing any last-minute financial issues that can still be addressed before next Thursday, based on the most likely assumptions as to who will win.

Hard as I try, however, I simply cannot think of much that is worthwhile left to do apart from cross our fingers.

It might still be possible to call a lender with an attractive fixed rate and negotiate an immediate approval on a loan. This

Best advice is to sit tight, cross your fingers and wait for the election to end

might be a wise move for some, given expectations of a likely interest rate rise after the election is decided, as long as legal and other fees don't outweigh any savings.

It makes sense not to lock into the plethora of two and three-year fixed-rate savings deals now on the market, particularly with some three-month rates looking quite generous.

But elsewhere? There's not a lot that can be done now or even in the weeks immediately afterwards. This is a consequence of the growing closeness between

new Labour and Tories on almost all matters related to financial decision-making.

Taxes? No fear of that fearfully strict Gordon Brown raising them, or denying us our most important loopholes to stuff a few more quid out of the Revenue's reach.

Share prices? The markets have already discounted the prospect of a Labour victory and any movement there is not electorally determined to a significant degree, although if John Major can pull off another term for his party, prepare for a short, sharp surge in equity prices.

Pensions, where the Tories are intent on privatising the state pension, is one area of difference. Perhaps the most optimistic punt, if you believe in the possibility of a surprise rebound by the Conservatives, is into utilities, whose share prices have lagged in expectation of Labour's windfall tax. Even so (though I may have to eat my words next Thursday) the

possibility seems so remote that it might be wiser to go for the National Lottery rather than invest in another Tory win.

Justin Urquhart Stewart, director at Barclays Stockbrokers, is among those arranging a last-minute fixed-rate home loan. Elsewhere, he jokes, not even drinks company shares, which traditionally do well at election time, have shown any great drive.

Perhaps the best point comes from Roddy Kohn, a financial adviser at Kohn Cougar, in Bristol. He points out that anyone's savings strategy should be based on the long term, looking 10, 15 or even more years out.

Under such circumstances, world events, such as US interest-rate movements, or the future direction of Hong Kong, have a far bigger determining role on share prices than Thursday's election. The best advice is to sit tight and wait for a few weeks.

Who would be a trustee?

Pensions: Stephanie Hawthorne looks at a dangerous job

Fancy a job where the duties involve taking responsibility for potentially millions of pounds? Where the amount you are paid is precisely nothing? Try being a pension trustee.

Trustees are solely responsible for running occupational pension schemes from 6 April 1997. They have terrifying responsibilities and face severe penalties for non-compliance. Yet no previous experience is necessary, nor are qualifications and training under the Pensions Act compulsory. And the standard rate of pay for this onerous job is nothing.

The first reaction of one trustee board when they learnt of the new rules was to resign on the spot. Indeed, there is a danger that the severe penalties for non-compliance (including fines and even prison) will deter people from becoming trustees.

But Tom Ross of Alexander Clay is reassuring: "On the whole, the actual role of the trustee is essentially little different than before. It is more strictly codified in a pretty bureaucratic way."

Trustees' many duties include drawing up a statement of investment principles, studying the scheme rules, the trust deed, the most recent actuarial valuation and scrutinising the assets and the members.

They must see the pension scheme is operated in accordance with the trust

deed. They must keep proper records and seek expert advice in banking, investment, legal, auditing and actuarial fields. And advisers must be appointed by trustees and not by the employer. Getting things wrong can lead to massive court fines, legal bills and compensation orders against individual trustees.

The Pensions Act, which came into force this month, requires that one-third of pension scheme trustees should be nominated by members unless alternative rules are established. If employers are seeking to opt out, they must notify the trustees no later than 5 May 1997. A small number of schemes are excluded from the new trustee nomination requirements.

Michael Harvey, chief executive of Buck Consultants a firm of independent actuaries and pension specialists, believes the introduction of member trustees "if badly handled, can lead to conflict within the trustee body, confusion, negotiation, mistrust and adverse publicity".

Rosemary Mounce, pensions and benefits manager at Geest, the fruit and vegetable importer, disagrees: "Member trustees are a great improvement, often better than management trustees who often are just doing it to get a rung up the promotion ladder."

"Worker trustees take their responsi-

bilities keenly. And union trustees are good with their back-up."

Any trustee without training is taking a huge risk and may not be able to discharge his or her duties satisfactorily. Employers must provide member trustees with reasonable paid time for attending meetings and for training. If you are a trustee or advise trustees, insist that you and your colleagues attend courses. The February issue of *Pensions World* lists all the major trustee trainers.

As well as information on tax, social security and pension law, trustees should receive briefings on their own scheme.

Some schemes may use a professional trustee. Richard Thomas of Law Debenham argues: "There should be an element on the trustee board that is independent of the company, the members, and the adviser and delegates."

Trustees should consider indemnity policies. These will normally provide cover for settlements or awards made by the courts and for legal defence costs.

For diligent and trained trustees, the rewards are great: a secure and prosperous retirement, not only for their fellow employees, but also for themselves.

Stephanie Hawthorne is editor of *Pensions World*

New Extra Income PEP

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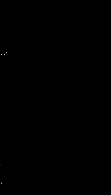


The NatWest Extra Income PEP pays a high rate of 6.6% p.a. tax-free interest. There's no initial charge, no exit charge* and a low annual charge of only 0.75%.

Also, as a bonus, you'll receive a £240 discount on the initial charge of £240 when you open your NatWest Extra Income PEP.

You can start your NatWest Extra Income PEP with just £1,000, and you don't need to be a NatWest customer to apply.

As long as you have a NatWest Extra Income PEP, you can



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*The initial charge is £240. The annual charge is 0.75% of the fund value. The exit charge is £240. The discount is £240.

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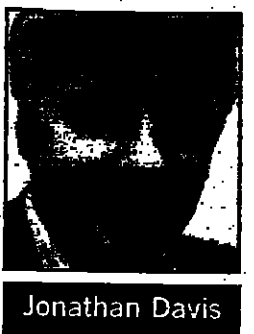
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Less than one week to go to the election, and disappointingly we have had only one rogue poll to disturb what otherwise appears to be a smooth transition towards a Labour government.

Even the spread betting market, which attracts some of the smartest money, seems stuck in a narrow trading range as far as estimates of the outcome go, pointing to a Labour majority of around 70 (though I am told some shrewd money has been heading in the direction of backing the Liberal Democrats and Scottish Nationalists to do better than expected).

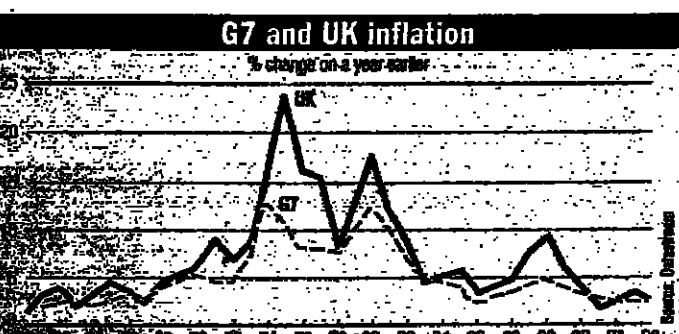
As an unreconstructed contrarian, I shall be disappointed if the actual result does not confound the pundits once more, but with no inside knowledge of any sort to call on, my personal ambition remains the more modest one of surviving until polling day without committing any money to the outcome.

As in so many things, however, the real bet that faces everyone this week is how much they are effectively wagering by doing nothing. For investors, in particular, the big unreserved question is whether, in voting for a Labour government



Jonathan Davis

The big question is whether, in voting for Labour, investors are also voting for higher inflation



the curbs on organised labour adopted by many governments have also played their part. "Throughout the industrialised world," he writes in his book *The Death of Inflation*, "the old cost plus bureaucratic system of interlocking quasi monopolies is collapsing."

With markets opening to competition all round the world, and consumers everywhere in the ascendant, it is little surprise, he concludes, that inflation continues to fall faster and more durably than everyone expects.

One small but telling example is what is happening to telephone charges in hotels. Time was when the hotel added a huge mark-up to

received a warm welcome in the central banking fraternity.)

When Roger started expounding his thesis that inflation was yesterday's problem, around 1990, he was greeted with incredulity, especially in the City. When he repeated the thesis in 1992, when Britain was bounced out of the ERM and into a compulsory devaluation of the pound, most institutional investors "laughed even louder" he recalls.

The conventional view was that devaluation would import inflation again, as it had always done in the past. But miraculously, the opposite proved to be the case. Inflation is the dog that has so far failed to bark. In the UK, although the Government has failed to hit its election-day target of 2.5 per cent inflation, it is only a hair's breadth away from it, and this despite four years of steady economic growth and a sharp fall in unemployment.

Where are we now in the inflationary cycle? According to Roger, while the UK's inflation record is still remarkable by recent historical standards, it is by no means the most impressive performance around. The latest data shows that inflation in Germany is down to 1.5

An investment basket



High street shares: Rachel Fixsen peps up her shopping list

Rice crispies, semi-skimmed milk, bin liners, a building society account – and 100 Rank Group convertible preference shares. Stock market investments could be just another item on your shopping list these days. On the high street, building societies now offer packaged equity products which are low-risk enough to attract the cautious saver.

Familiar names such as Woolwich Building Society, Co-operative Insurance Services and Halifax Building Society all offer equity unit trusts, usually through a tax-free personal equity plan (PEP).

Halifax started offering its own PEPs in 1995, and believes it has tapped a new market, with its high street accessibility attracting savers from outside the professional classes towards equity investment.

"The customers we have are often first-time buyers of equity products and they do like the comfort and trust of being able to go and deal with someone they know and who in their eyes is tangible," says John Warburton, investment product manager at Halifax.

Halifax offers PEP investments in its Income Trust and its Growth Trust. These funds have only been running for two years. So far, both have slightly underperformed their competitors, and fees are

above average. The spread between the price you buy and sell at is 5.68 per cent, and the annual management fee is 1.5 per cent of the total investment.

Woolwich offers three funds – its UK Stockmarket Fund, an International Managed Fund and its Corporate Bond Fund. To make investing seem as simple as possible, Woolwich has a Stockmarket Card, which investors can use to buy and sell units and check how much their investment is worth at any time.

Though linked to the long-standing household name, Co-operative Insurance Services has no retail outlets and operates through direct sell either by post or phone. It has three unit trust funds: UK Growth Trust, UK Income Trust and Envision Trust – the UK's largest ecological fund. All have performed better than average within their sector over the past five years, according to the financial information provider *Moneyfacts*.

Many other building societies sell PEPs, though most are managed by an insurer. It is easy to buy a PEP on the high street, but are you sacrificing potential performance for convenience?

Independent financial advisers say you should give yourself more choice. "There might be another product out there that's

more appropriate to your circumstances," says Graham Hooper, investment director at IFA firm Chase de Vere, in Bath.

Mr Hooper says it is no coincidence that the performance of these building society funds lags behind that of the more established fund managers. According to *Moneyfacts*, a £1,000 investment in the Woolwich UK Stockmarket Fund three years ago would now be worth £1,282.55, while in the Perpetual Income fund it would have grown to £1,402.09.

However, Woolwich says its fund is invested very conservatively. "It invests in blue chip companies. As a building society we've deliberately set up risk-averse funds – we don't like volatility," says Ian Jackson, operations manager at Woolwich Unit Trust Managers. "The Woolwich feels it is in the savings market, and that goes through from deposits to equities."

But the outlook for the market is uncertain at the moment, with the imminent election and some concerns about how the economy is going to develop over the next six months, says Richard Jeffrey, group economist at merchant bank Charterhouse. "For inexperienced investors, you don't want to invest just ahead of a period of uncertainty, because you can get your fingers burned in the short term."

WHO ARE YOU GOING TO VOTE FOR?

ALLIANCE & LEICESTER	6.40% GROSS PA	✓
BRITANNIA	6.00% GROSS PA	
NATIONWIDE	6.20% GROSS PA	
HALIFAX	5.60% GROSS PA	
WOOLWICH	5.40% GROSS PA	
ABBEY NATIONAL	5.00% GROSS PA	

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loose change

Coventry Building Society is raising the rates on its First Instant and Postal 50 accounts. Postal 50 account rates go up from 0.6 per cent on deposits of £2,000 to 0.25 per cent more on higher sums. Call 0345 665522. Birmingham Midshires is launching a range of fixed-rate savings accounts, including a three-year term paying up to 7.15 per cent gross annually on deposits above £50,000. Two-year accounts pay 6.9 per cent gross on the same sum. Call free on 0645 720721. Dartington Building Society is launching a variable rate cashback mortgage offering up to 3 per cent of the initial loan, up to a maximum of £2,400.

There is a £150 reservation fee. Call 01325 366366. Premier Fund Managers is launching a Global Equity Protector fund which tracks a range of world stock markets and attempts to restrict losses by using options. Call 0800 212577.

Bristol & West is offering a range of new home loans, including a mortgage fixed at 7.25 per cent to March 2002 on loans worth up to 90 per cent of the home's value. Call 0800 119955.

NatWest has a free 32-page guide on building society windfalls, explaining everything you need to know about share dealing. Call 0800 200400.

Bradford & Bingley is to cut 0.2 per cent off the variable rate of all borrowers who have been with the society for two years or more. The cut applies from 1 July. Fixed-rate borrowers become eligible when they move on to the variable rate.

DIRECT LINE RATES

SAVINGS RATES	
Direct Line Instant Access Account	
BALANCE	ANNUAL GROSS RATE
£1 - £2,499	4.50%
£2,500 - £4,999	5.00%
£5,000 - £24,999	5.50%
£25,000 - £49,999	5.75%
£50,000 - £99,999	6.00%
£100,000+	6.10%
MORTGAGE RATE	
Direct Line Standard Variable Mortgage Rate	
VARIABLE RATE	6.31%
APR	6.5%

All rates correct at 16th April 1997.



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Best borrowing rates

Telephone	Account	Interest rate	Term	Notes
FIXED RATES				
Barclays Bank	0200 500000	4.25% to 1 year	95	0.75%
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	4.00% to 1/6/99	95	0.25%
Ally Bank	0800 550100	4.50% to 31/7/97	95	0.25%
VARIABLE RATES				
Barclays Bank	0200 500000	3.75% to 31/7/97	95	0.25%
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	4.75% to 1/6/99	95	0.25%
NatWest BS	0800 591500	5.00% to 31/7/97	95	0.25%
FIRST TIME BUYERS FIXED RATES				
Ally Bank	0800 550100	4.00% to 31/7/97	95	0.25%
Barclays Bank	0200 500000	4.75% to 31/7/97	95	0.25%
Landwell BS	0800 225221	7.25% to 1/6/99	95	0.25%
FIRST TIME BUYERS VARIABLE RATES				
Barclays Bank	0200 500000	3.75% to 31/7/97	95	0.25%
Barclays Bank	0200 500000	3.75% to 31/7/97	95	0.25%
NatWest BS	0800 591500	5.00% to 31/7/97	95	0.25%

Telephone	APR %	Max LTV	Fixed monthly payments (£3,000 over 3 yrs)	Notes
DISBURSED				
Barclays Bank	0200 500000	95%	£114.25	With insurance
Barclays Bank	0200 500000	95%	£114.25	Without insurance
Barclays Bank	0200 500000	95%	£114.25	With insurance
Barclays Bank	0200 500000	95%	£114.25	Without insurance
SECURED (SECOND CHARGE)				
Barclays Bank	0200 500000	95%	£114.25	With insurance
Barclays Bank	0200 500000	95%	£114.25	Without insurance

Telephone	Account	Interest rate	Term	Notes
DISBURSED				
Barclays Bank	0200 500000	4.00%	95	0.75%
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Barclays Bank	0200 500000	4.00%	95	0.75%

Telephone	Card Type	Min	Rate	APR	Annual	Int. free
STARTED						
Barclays Bank	0200 500000	Visa	—	0.75%	9.50%	nil
Barclays Bank	0200 500000	Visa	—	0.75%	9.50%	nil
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Best savings rates

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NatWest BS	0800 591500	5.00%	95	0.25%

Telephone	Account	Interest rate	Term	Notes
FIXED RATES				
Barclays Bank	0200 500000	4.25%	95	0.75%
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	4.00%	95	0.25%
Ally Bank	0800 550100	4.50%	95	0.25%
VARIABLE RATES				
Barclays Bank	0200 500000	3.75%	95	0.25%
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	4.75%	95	0.25%
NatWest BS	0800 591500	5.00%	95	0.25%
FIRST TIME BUYERS FIXED RATES				
Ally Bank	0800 550100	4.00%	95	0.25%
Barclays Bank	0200 500000	4.75%	95	0.25%
Landwell BS	0800 225221	7.25%	95	0.25%
FIRST TIME BUYERS VARIABLE RATES				
Barclays Bank	0200 500000	3.75%	95	0.25%
Barclays Bank	0200 500000	3.75%	95	0.25%
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			£20,000	6.25F	Year
Passenger's Grand Income Bond	Series 3	5 year	£500	7.00F	Month
Children's Bond	Income H	5 year	£25	6.75F	Maturity

P post only *F* fixed rate
N net rate *A* All withdrawals subject of 30 day loss of interest
All rates are shown gross and are subject to change without notice.
Source: MONEYFACTS 01692 500677. 24 April 1997

First, find yourself a good manager

Put your windfall to work in a unit trust PEP

Unit Trust	Manager	Investment Focus	Current Price	Dividend Yield
Admiral	Admiral	Global	1.00	1.5%
Capital Growth	Capital Growth	Global	1.00	1.5%
Equity	Equity	Global	1.00	1.5%
Franklin	Franklin	Global	1.00	1.5%
FT	FT	Global	1.00	1.5%
Henderson	Henderson	Global	1.00	1.5%
HSBC	HSBC	Global	1.00	1.5%
Jupiter	Jupiter	Global	1.00	1.5%
Lazard	Lazard	Global	1.00	1.5%
M&G	M&G	Global	1.00	1.5%
Paragon	Paragon	Global	1.00	1.5%
Scotia	Scotia	Global	1.00	1.5%
Standard	Standard	Global	1.00	1.5%
Templeton	Templeton	Global	1.00	1.5%
Windsor	Windsor	Global	1.00	1.5%

PEPs: Tony Lyons on what to look for

For those who want to use their building society shares or other windfall as a springboard for a long-term investment strategy it makes good sense to put the shares into the hands of a professional fund manager.

Most of the big names in the fund management industry have made special arrangements to take windfall shares into their personal equity plans, so that you can make money from them free of tax.

Not all windfall share schemes are the same. It's not simply a matter of picking a name you know, or one which advertises low charges.

You should think not just about what you want to do with your free shares, but also what you are likely to do about savings, investment and retirement planning – not just now, but in the long term.

PEPs are increasingly popular as a way of saving for retirement or for the increasing costs of higher education, but it's important to remember that, as with all stock market investments, they are a long-term bet. Never forget that the value of your holding will fluctuate as the stock market moves: if you have to sell at the wrong time you could end up with a lot less than you expected.

Fund managers handle windfall shares in one of two ways. Some operate PEP

what the general management groups are offering to see if they have a scheme that suits you.

Charges for placing windfall shares in a general PEP vary widely. To give some examples, Mercury will charge £15 a year while Fidelity will make no charge until 6 April 1999 and then charge £15 a year thereafter. Save & Prosper will charge £25 a year from the start of the 1998 tax year while Johnson Fry will charge nothing for the first year and 1.5 per cent of the value thereafter. M&G has opted to charge £3 a year for each set of windfall shares transferred into its PEP.

Other groups have decided to levy charges on the number of dividend collections they make – £5 per dividend in the case of Henderson, £4 with Paragon and £3 with Skandia. But remember, most companies issue an interim dividend at the half-year stage as well as an annual one.

If you have received free shares in Alliance & Leicester, you must put them into a PEP before 30 May – and, to be on the safe side, you should make your decision no later than the previous weekend. The Bank Holiday could be the ideal time to sift through competing offers from the fund managers and get the form in the post before the deadline.

For those who are new to PEPs, it is sensible to look at

More than one parcel

Multiple handouts: Tony Lyons offers advice

Eight million savers will qualify for windfalls in Britain's biggest giveaway and many are in the happy position of benefiting from free shares in more than one of those converting from mutual status to stock market listing. For those who want to keep the shares, the converting companies are likely to follow the Alliance & Leicester lead and offer a free-of-charge shareholder account.

But anyone who is in line for a parcel of shares in more than one company needs to think carefully before deciding how to hold on to them. The A&L ShareSafe account is what is technically known as a corporate nominee account; it is just for the company's own shares and the dividend income will be taxable.

For those expecting multiple windfalls, the most

tax-efficient way to hold them is to put them into a personal equity plan. Unlike the shareholder accounts, by using a PEP, all dividends and capital gains will be tax-free.

If you do not yet have a PEP and are tempted to use one offered by a converting building society, make sure it will accept other windfall shares.

A&L is offering two plans: one is a unit trust, so your shares will be sold and the proceeds invested in units. The other plan is what's known as a self-select PEP; you can use it to hold shares in any companies you choose, provided they are based in the UK or elsewhere in Europe.

Plans of this kind are tailor-made for those receiving multiple windfalls – and they can also be used to shelter other shareholdings free of tax.


If you have any

privatisation shares, it may be worth adding these to the PEP pot as well and avoid paying tax on future dividends.

Self-select plans are offered by a variety of other organisations, with the new-style execution-only stockbrokers such as Redmayne Bentley, the Share Centre and ShareLink offering the lowest charges.

If you prefer to top up your windfalls with investments in managed funds, several leading PEP managers will accept multiple windfall shares, as shown in the table.

They will include them in their general PEP plans for a small charge with you retaining ownership. You can then decide at your leisure what you want to do with them, whether to retain ownership, exchange them for units in your other PEP investments or sell them.



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JUPITER EUROPEAN FUND	+ 211%	1st out of 109
over 5 years		sector funds

Source: Micropal. Offer to bid, net income reinvested to 1.4.97.
Unit Trust Sectors: UK Equity Income; UK Equity Growth; European.

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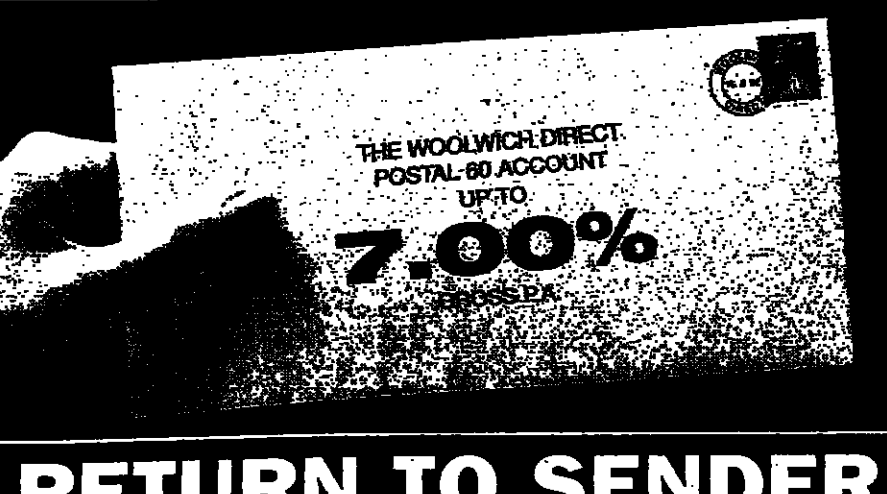
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Mark the box for further information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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£800,000 - £1,000,000	4.50%

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Learning to live with risk

Stock market: Ken Welsby suggests strategies for novices

For anyone considering stock market investment, windfalls could provide an ideal way to start. Shares in big banks and insurance companies are generally safe, so you aren't likely to lose your shirt.

But – and it remains a big but – don't be seduced by success with windfalls into committing all your spare capital to shares. The two cardinal rules are to do your homework before you make a move – and never to invest in the market

money that you can not afford to lose.

Homework first. Start to read the financial pages and, to make sure you understand them, a book or two such as *Be your own Stockbroker* by Charles Vincent which explains investment principles and the workings of the market in simple terms.

Decide on your long-term goals, but be realistic about the growth you want to achieve, and the time you have to do it.

Mr Vincent, a London stockbroker, says that many of his clients are in their late 40s or early 50s, who have been retired early from management posts in large corporations.

"They need to make their capital grow to secure their old age. So they are looking to invest for 10 years or maybe a bit longer," he says. "Then there are people who want to help their children – perhaps to pay their way through university. They may only have five or six years in which to accumulate enough capital. So they will want to follow a different investment strategy."

Next, talk to some stockbrokers. If you are a novice and – in addition to your windfall, you have substantial capital to invest in shares – you can opt for what's known as "dealing with advice". This is the traditional form of stockbroking: you and the broker

discuss investment strategy and ideas, the broker will give his views and you will make decisions jointly.

The alternative is to manage your own portfolio and use an execution-only broker to do the deals. Execution-only brokers are forbidden to give advice: if you telephone and instruct them to buy shares in XYZ they will do so – whatever they might think of its prospects.

It is essential to keep a close eye on your portfolio. One of the first points to remember is the distinction between long-term investments and short-term trading. In the first, you are looking for quality – companies which will deliver solid dividends year after year. In the second, you are not concerned with the underlying business prospects – you want to buy the shares cheaply and sell when the price has risen by a given percentage.

If you are computer-literate, it makes sense to subscribe to one of the on-line dealing and information services, which can provide a wealth of market and company data.

Does all this sound too hard? In that case, why not put a toe in the water of the stock market with investment trusts. Although some insist on share exchanges, most will allow you to retain your windfall shares.

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Investment Trust or Group	Windfall shares only?	Conditions if any
Alliance Trust	✓	min £750 in Alliance shares
Broker Fund Saver	✓	
Edinburgh Fund Mgrs	✓	must transfer into inv trust PEP
Fidelity	✓	
Flemings	✓	£3k min into Flemings PEP
Foreign & Colonial	✓	F&C share exchange service
Gartmore	✓	£100 monthly/£1500 lump sum
Guinness Flight	✓	min PEP subscription
Henderson Investors	✓	£2k lump sum or monthly
Kleinwort Benson	✓	must transfer into KBIM PEP
INVESTCO	✓	minimum £1500
John Govett	✓	
Mercury	✓	
Murray Johnstone	✓	must hold 97/96 PEP
Perpetual	✓	
Schroders	✓	
Stewart Ivory	✓	

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First-class posters: An arty Eastern European effort (above) costs £350. Boris Karloff's *The Mummy* went for \$453,000

Film art fanatics

Roll over Gainsborough, Reynolds, Turner. An illustrated poster for the 1932 horror film *The Mummy*, starring Boris Karloff, fetched \$453,500 (£283,500) last month at Sotheby's New York. For that money, you could buy a museum-quality Gainsborough conversation piece in oils, or five or six good portraits by Reynolds, or a portfolio of half a dozen major works by all three.

The gruesome mummy image is not even an original painting. It is a mass-produced printed poster. What does such an astronomical price say about the market? Should you rush to invest or steer clear of a fizz-bang rocket about to crash?

No doubt about it, that price was crazy: not a reliable market indicator. It was personal, the product of a saleroom duel between two fanatical collectors. But there were still plenty of bids at \$200,000. The Mummy auction last month was ultra-buoyant: it shifted 90 per cent of its posters, 95 per cent by value.

This is a market sustained not only by nostalgia but by rarity. There are only two known copies of *The Mummy*. In fact, there are no known posters for about 90 per cent of films made before 1935 and only 75 per cent before 1945. A beneficiary who discovers in the trunk of a deceased cinema projectionist a poster for Disney's first Mickey Mouse film, *Steamboat Willie* (1929) or the first talkie *The Jazz Singer*, starring Al Jolson (1927), can expect a six-figure windfall.

American dealers will be competing at Christie's South Kensington in London next month for the only two known posters for any of the films made by Alfred Hitchcock in England. Modestly estimated at \$6,000-£9,000 each, they are

Collect to invest: John Windsor on why a movie poster can fetch \$450,000

for *The 39 Steps* (1935), starring Robert Donat and Madeleine Carroll.

The American dealers' twice-yearly foray to South Ken is a transatlantic mission of market support. They consign for auction there posters with British appeal and use the proceeds to offset purchases in the same sale of posters they expect to sell back home. It is known, in accountants' jargon, as "contra-ing". But an American bid of £20,000 for the Hitchcock would surprise nobody.

Tony Nourmand is chief aficionado of the London film poster market – a consultant for South Ken for four years, who launched his own film poster gallery in London two years ago.

Walk into Nourmand's gallery in Great Marlborough Street, west London, and you will immediately acquire a market sense. There is no Disney, no Elvis (Americans want Disney, nobody wants Elvis). But there is plenty of Bogart, plenty of Madeleine Carroll and Audrey Hepburn, plenty of Ealing comedy – and a plethora of Italian-language Bogarts with moody deep blue backgrounds.

Collectors still want the famous title, *Casablanca*, and the star's face, Bogart, but they have also become artistically discriminating. Language is no barrier. Italian and French artwork is preferred to American. Nourmand says his clients

"wants" list is headed by two requests for the Italian *Casablanca* (1942). He could sell them for £25,000 each and be happy to turn a profit of 10-15 per cent. "If someone spent \$453,500 on *The Mummy*, then *Casablanca* has got to be undervalued. I think that so many of these prices we are seeing are still incredibly cheap."

His gallery is offering the French poster of the film noir *Key Largo* – Bogart, Bacall, Edward G Robinson – for £2,750. The artwork, showing the faces of all three, is stunning.

Horror? The rarest, most sought-after Hammer poster, showing Christopher Lee in neck-biting mode in *Dracula* (1958) is estimated by Nourmand at £3,000-£5,000 at its auction debut at South Ken next month. "I would look anybody in the eye who paid £10,000 for it," he says, "and tell them they had a good buy."

The trendy, arty Eastern Europeans look good little earners. They added the image of a woman masturbating (not in the film) to their poster for *Blow Up* (Redgrave, Hemmings, 1966). Nourmand's gallery is offering it at £350.

The Japanese have started buying. They want nothing pre-Sixties and go for Clint Eastwood, Steve McQueen, and Italian and French posters – Goddard, Truffaut. "Never mind what you like," I told a young couple touring Nourmand's gallery. "Buy what the Japanese are buying." They left before I could offer an apology.

Auction of vintage film posters: Christie's South Kensington, Monday 19 May (2pm) (0171-581 7611). Tony Nourmand, Reel Poster Gallery, First Floor, 22 Great Marlborough Street, London W1W 7JL (0171-734 4303).

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inside back

TO FIND OUT WHAT'S ON TV, WHERE TO GO AND WHEN, READ TODAY'S **eye**



Serena Mackesy
In my week

The contrast with doctor-lawyer-land is just too great: most of the people here look as though washing themselves is an effort, let alone washing their clothes

There's an old girl next to us, glumly studying a Welsh Mountain mare with a sweet little dished face. The mare's hooves are unshod, and sport cracks wide enough to lose a penny in. Nonetheless, with that optimism ponies drum up in the most thisle-fied of circumstances, she continues to poke her head through the bars of the gate and greet each grumpy brat who offers her a bit of old hot dog roll.

Old girl, who actually can't be more than 40, roughly the same age as her acrylic sweater, addresses her companion, a Pictish redhead with a pushchair. "I hope," she says, "she doesn't go back to him or they'll probably kill each other. And the kids and all." Only she doesn't say that, because she contrives to cram five - count them, five - uses of the f-word into two sentences. Pictish companion clears her nose with a hefty influx of breath. "I hate her," she observes, and those Anglo-Saxonisms are an important part of her self-expression as well. "She's a stupid cow."

Such is Southall horse market, a metropolitan tradition about to celebrate its 300th year, auctioning the paupers and failures of the equine world to the ugliest examples of the human. You know those skinny skewbald nags you see, nosing the ragwort, from your train window? This is where they come from, where they go to, where, ultimately, they reach the end of the line. Here, opposite the cop shop, among a forest of sagging roof beams, corrugated iron and discount furniture warehouses, you can buy yourself a pony to keep on the allotment and still have change from a ton.

It's been one of those days where you keep feeling you've stepped off an aeroplane. Southall is a bit like that: a little country all of its own 10 minutes by train from central

London but thousands of miles away emotionally. It's not Asia, though the area is scattered with Hindu God shops, spice shops, silk shops, pillow-sized sacks of basmati, chaat houses and shops selling piles of sequinned open-toed sandals.

Claire and I have spent a lovely afternoon collecting plastic bagfuls of cloth - embroidered rept silk, green, brocade, silver lycra velvet, yellow-and-pink mimosas print, and more imeldas to swell our shoe racks. We've lunched on chickpeas and pancakes and little heaps of grated coconut, and had a nice chat about herbal medicine with the



owner of the restaurant. Walking eastwards along the High Street, we've turned up the alleyway marked in the A-Z as a market, and it's been like stepping into the country where everyone marries their cousins.

The contrast with doctor-lawyer-entrepreneur-land is just too great: most of the people here look as though washing themselves is an effort that's beyond them, let alone washing their clothes. There is the odd flat-capped, tweed-jacketed country old boy leaning contemptuously on a fence, the occasional face that would look great on a poster for the gypsy-caravan holiday idyll, but most of the men strutting among the piles of droppings and pursuing their lips at the RSPCA inspectors obviously share bloodlines with Fred West: mops of frizzy hair over faces whose creases are etched in black, dachshund

bodies on bowed, foreshortened legs.

"Good God," says Claire, "where do all these people come from?" I know what she means. The last time I saw this many ugly people in one place was in the villages around Wadi Rum, but at least the Bedouin have thousands of years of relative isolation to explain their appearance. Where these people hide in the big city is a mystery: you certainly never see them in groups, not even at football matches. Everyone shows signs of inherited disorders: underhanging jaws and overhanging jaws, missing teeth, watery blue eyes, unnatural hands, bum-fluff coating hips and

jaws. The scene has the greyness of a Pathé newsreel film of life in the East End before wartime food rationing improved the British diet beyond all recognition.

A couple of tiny ponies in a stall with a larger pibald start squealing and kicking, and a crowd gathers, faces lit up with the pleasurable prospect of a free cockfight. The auctioneer takes to his tiny brick booth, switches on the sound system and starts taking bids as horses and ponies, broken-down ones, unbroken ones, ungroomed ones, are whipped and slapped into trotting out. Prices go up in increments of £1 and £2; a little palomino gelding goes for £62, a spotted colt for £77, a Shetland mare and foal for £190. And I really, really want to leave, to close my mind to the depressing thought that, in the end, if you're born poor enough, or ugly enough, or unlucky enough in this country, you still have little more chance of improving your lot, of escaping cuffs and cusses and the prospect of being sold and sidelined, than you did back in the days when this market first came into being. Remember that when you vote on Thursday.

The politics of dodging

What's become clear over this election is the sheer futility of political interviewing today: rather like bacteria that have developed resistance to antibiotics, politicians have become immune to interviewers' techniques. Peter Mandelson offered a fine demonstration of the new indifference on David Starkey's show on Talk Radio on Sunday, combating Dr Starkey's gleefully partisan and intellectually engaged jabs and scurrilities with a display of weary good manners. "If you'll allow me to finish..." please let me answer the question you've asked..." - which bore little relation to the actual pattern of the conversation.

Phone-ins are supposed to get round this sort of thing. The theory behind the political phone-in is, I take it, that while politicians will feel free to ignore questions put to them by professional journalists, they can't do this to members of the public: here, at last, they will be on the spot. This idea is fuelled by the lovely memory of Mrs Thatcher



Robert Hanks
the week on radio

squirming as a housewife interrogated her over the sinking of the "Belgrano". Sadly, though, it no longer works. The most skilfully evasive exchange of the election so far came when Gary from London called Dr Starkey to ask Peter Mandelson what had happened to the word "socialist", which he couldn't track down in Labour's manifesto. Well, Mr Mandelson replied, all Labour's values underpinned the manifesto. The conversation continued: Gary: But are they socialist values?

PM: You can apply whatever label you like, what's important is that, at root, we have certain core beliefs and certain values which have driven us throughout our achievements throughout this century and will continue to do so as we go into the next.

Gary: And those core values have always been socialist. Are they socialist now?

PM: If I didn't subscribe to these values, Gary, I wouldn't be in the Labour Party.

Gary: Well, it's not a difficult question, is it? Are you a socialist?

PM: I am a member of the Labour Party and I subscribe to the values and beliefs on which our party is founded. I am not interested in bandying around labels or name-calling.

Did you spot the deft way he inserted a "these" where we would have expected a "those" ("If I didn't subscribe to these values, Gary..."), thereby making it impossible to pin down exactly which values he was referring to?

In the end, though, this sort of virtuosity is counter-productive - you can tell he's just

showing off. Michael Howard has a rather better technique, which he brought into play on last Monday's Election Call. Again, he failed to answer the precise point put - for instance, defending stoutly the government's policy on mandatory sentencing without actually mentioning the issue of diminution of judicial independence, which was what the caller had been cross about. But he prefaced the evasion with a few words of anxious regret: "I'm sorry you feel that way..."

Something odd has happened here, which has less to do with politics than with the way we think radio works. Politicians no longer address the person they are supposedly talking to; instead, their remarks are aimed past them, at some notional floating voter who might be listening in. Listening to most phone-ins at the moment is like being at a party, where the person you're trying to talk to is constantly looking over your shoulder to see who else has come into the room. No wonder so many people are heading off to find the drinks table.

Want a safe job? Apply for pontiff

Two new findings came to light this week. One, Manchester United must spend about £20m on a competent centre forward to advance any further than the UEFA Champions League Semi-Final - Live (ITV Wed). Two, the average viewer watches three-and-a-half hours of television a day. That's the equivalent of two semi-finals an evening, incorporating half-times. Or seven editions of The Rock and Goal Years (ITV Wed), a clips show cynically scheduled to inherit the Champions League audience. Or 42 screenings per diem of the Party Election Broadcast by the Liberal Democrats (all channels, Wed), the one with two fat old coves playing football. Never let it be said that the third party, like the third channel, doesn't know what the people want: the bitter pill of propaganda was coated in the sugar of a footballing metaphor.

While the election coverage limps towards its endgame, just about every documentary on television has been thematically scheduled to ask the topical question: what does it take to hold down a top job? In the Sack Race (BBC2, Sat) Alan Hansen wondered what kind of pressure junkie would fancy managing a football club. Shoot Out In Swansea: The



Jasper Rees
the week on television

Making of Twin Town (BBC2, Sat) was a frank analysis of the febrile monomania required of the debutant film director. And Everyman (BBC1, Sun) went to Rome to inspect the list of men who would be pontiff.

It turns out there's surprisingly little daylight between the three vocations: they all call for blind faith in your own vision, and a discipular following to implement it. The Pope ultimately differs from football managers and film directors only because he doesn't have to worry about being fired or going over budget. Everyman yielded a wonderful adjective to describe those who are considered eligible for the papacy. "Papa-bable" literally translates as "popeable", and it should be put on a fast track into the

English language forthwith. No word does a better job of discreetly measuring suitability for public leadership. As in is Tony Blair popeable?

Every time the parliamentary Conservative party selects a new leader - and that'll be the next ballot paper it puts an "X" on after Thursday - it is routinely described as the most saturnine electorate in the world. But for sheer opacity of intention and convulsion of motive, the Tory party hasn't a patch on the conclave of cardinals which chooses the Pope. So secret is their electoral procedure, apparently, that cardinals are frisked for mobile phones before they enter the voting chamber. No matter that mobile phones hadn't been invented when they all put their cross next to John Paul II: this electorate is so sophisticated its members would have got round that one in a jiffy.

So unreadable are the runes in a papal election that the few certainties are best explained, Lib Dem style, via a footballing metaphor. Thus it is that an African cardinal has as much chance of becoming Pope as an African team does of winning the World Cup: slender, but imaginable. And, as with the US football team, no American cardinal has a prayer. Like the ban on mobile

phones in the conclave, so serious is the British addiction to the small screen that some voters this Thursday are apparently reluctant to enter the polling station without their televisions. There was a documentary this week called Interview with a Zombie (C4, Sun) about a Haitian who has been legally declared undead. For some viewers it must have been like catching sight of themselves in the mirror.

Others saw interview with a Zombie listed and promptly phoned Channel 4 to complain that this was a Prime Ministerial broadcast too far. But in a campaign soiled by daily exchanges of sterile name-calling and distorted by the refusal of either main party to let its female front benchers anywhere near a television studio, you do have to applaud the Conservative leader for one outstanding act of restraint. He may have told you more about what Labour did in power before 1979 than what he would do in power after 1997, but he has nobly resisted the temptation to campaign on the Liberals' dismal record when last in government. It was only two years ago, after all (the First and Second World Wars), just like Labour's last regime (the Falklands and Gulf). Is John Major popeable? Is he, my (left) foot.

DAMIEN HURTS...and his painfully creative struggle

THE GOOD NEWS DAMIEN IS THAT YOU HAVE FULLY RECOVERED FROM YOUR RECENT CREATIVE TRAUMA.....

YOUR ARTISTIC TALENTS HAVE RETURNED UNHARMED ENABLING YOU TO PROCEED WITH YOUR WORK.

SEE PASANDA I TOLD YOU I WAS BETTER

THE BAD NEWS IS THAT I AM AN ESCAPED MENTAL PATIENT WHO IMPERSONATES ANALYSTS.

Neil Kelter

Whatever happened to? British middle-distance running

In the golden summer of 1979, Sebastian Coe breaks three world records in six weeks, leaving fields and superlatives trailing in his wake. He completes the final lap of his final record at 1500m in glorious isolation for a time of 3 minutes 32 seconds. During the following gold-medalled summer at the Moscow Olympics, Steve Ovett comes first in the 800m, Coe second, before his winning the 1500m. Britain rules the middle-distance world.

Coe and Ovett often refuse to compete against one another, so we never really know who is the best. Meanwhile, along comes Steve Cram to steal their thunder, with victory over Said Aouita and a world record in 1985.

Success continues at the European championships of 1986 as, like "Three Spitzies coming out of the sun" (The Telegraph), Cram, Coe and Tom McKean make a clean

sweep of the medals in the 800m. The future of British middle-distance running seems assured.

But at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics not one Briton reaches the 1500 final - for the first time since 1960. Cram, prevented from competing by Matthew Yates, whose time for the mile is over four minutes, draws his own conclusions: "The ones who have come through are not up to standard.

Matthew Yates, for instance, is good but he's never going to break a world record."

Then, in September 1993, Noureddine Morceli takes two seconds off Cram's world mile record - down to 3:44.39 - in Rieti, northern Italy and the African domination of middle-distance running begins. Though Roger Bannister claims an unfair advantage for black runners "of genetics and upbringing".

The balance of power in British athletics shifts to shorter distances with Linford Christie and Sally Gunnell winning world, European and Olympic titles. Coe, now a Tony MP believes it is down to the lack of "decent PE teachers" - rather than funding. But, as the British 1500m champion, John Maycock (who he?) commented last month, "People think: '1500 m? We used to be good at that...' We're crap now." James Aftenast

WEATHER

General Summary and Outlook:

Northern and eastern Scotland should be mostly fine with hazy sunshine, especially at first. South-west Scotland should start dry but thickening cloud will bring light rain later. Northern Ireland will be cloudy with patchy rain early and late. Meanwhile much of England and Wales will start grey and damp and it will probably stay that way in the north and east. The south and west should brighten up for a time, but more rain will reach the West Country and south Wales.

Tomorrow, most of England and Wales will become bright for a time, but rain will spread quickly north-east in the afternoon to reach all areas by the end of the day. Northern Ireland should start dry but it will turn wet later. Scotland will be mostly cloudy, and heavy rain will spread from the south-west later in the afternoon and overnight. On Monday and Tuesday a brisk westerly flow will cover the country, bringing a mix of sunny spells and showers.

The British Isles

Aberdeen	c 9 48	Carlisle	f 8 46	Isles of Scilly	f 14 57	Plymouth	dr 13 55
Anglesey	f 10 50	Cork	c 15 59	Jersey	h 11 52	Ronaldsdown	r 7 45
Armagh	r 7 45	Dover	c 12 54	Lincoln	n/a	Scarborough	r 7 45
Belfast	r 7 45	Dublin	r 9 48	Liverpool	dr 12 54	Shrewsbury	r 8 46
Birmingham	r 9 48	Edinburgh	c 9 48	Lizard	f 11 52	Southampton	r 9 48
Blackpool	r 7 45	Exeter	dr 11 52	Manchester	r 7 45	St Andrews	c 9 48
Bournemouth	r 9 48	Glasgow	dr 11 52	Newcastle	c 8 46	Stornoway	f 10 50
Brighton	r 10 50	Guernsey	r 9 48	Nottingham	n/a	Time	f 11 52
Bristol	r 10 50	Inverness	r 9 48	Oxford	r 9 48	York	c 7 45
Cardiff	r 10 50	Ipswich	r 9 48				

Europe and The World

High W and Low C and E will move east. Low D will edge slowly north-east but Low F will move quickly east.

Albany	c 15 59	Florence	fg 18 54	Munich	c 18 54
Auckland	c 17 53	Frankfurt	c 17 53	New York	c 12 54
S. Aires	fg 17 53	Geneva	c 20 58	Nice	f 16 51
Bangkok	c 30 85	Gibraltar	c 20 58	Nicosia	c 20 58
Barcelona	fg 18 54	Helsinki	c 6 43	Paris	f 16 51
Beirut	fg 20 58	Hong Kong	c 22 72	Prague	f 17 53
Belgrade	c 13 55	Jerusalem	c 22 72	Reykjavik	f 5 41
Berlin	c 13 55	Islamabad	n/a	Rio de Jan	f 5 41
Bombay	f 32 90	Istanbul	c 10 50	Riyadh	c 31 85
Brussels	c 15 59	Jo'burg	c 16 51	Rome	f 17 53
Budapest	f 14 57	K. Lumpur	c 34 93	Stockholm	r 7 45
Cairo	c 24 75	Lisbon	c 19 56	Sydney	f 18 54
Cape Town	f 21 70	Los Angeles	f 19 56	Taipei	f 25 77
Casablanca	c 21 70	Madrid	c 16 51	Tokyo	f 19 56
Christchurch	n/a	Malpaca	f 20 58	Venice	c 16 51
Copenhagen	r 9 48	Malta	f 19 56	Vienna	f 18 54
Corfu	c 16 51	Melbourne	s 15 59	Warsaw	c 14 57
Darwin	f 33 91	Montreal	s 12 54	Washington	c 16 51
Dhahran	f 25 77	Moscow	c 12 54	Wellington	c 15 59

AA Roadwatch

Surveys, M25 J8-10. Vibration restrictions and lane closures both ways between Reigate and the A3 as major widening work continues.

London. A406, Upper Edmonton. Major roadworks on Angel Road over the Lea Valley viaduct. Bristol, M5 J18 and 19. Commencement in operation across the Avonmouth Bridge with a 50mph speed limit. Regular rush-hour delays.

Staffordshire, A50 Stoke-on-Trent. Major construction work at Melk. Long peak-time delays.

West Yorkshire, M1 J47. Major long-term roadworks continue around the Leeds junction with lane and speed restrictions. Expect delays on the M1, M621 and Dewsbury Road.

Perth/Kinross, A90 between Dundee and Perth. Roadworks until further notice.

North Devon, M3130. One lane open both ways at Eskine Spur until June 13th.

Aberdeen City. Queen Elizabeth Bridge closed northbound for roadworks. Diversion.

Out and about with AA Roadwatch call 0800 402 for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 50p per min at all times and VAT.

The Sky at Night

Draco coils around the little bear, Ursa Minor, high in the north-east in late evenings in spring.

Ursa Minor, Draco, Polaris, Vega, Altair.

Lighting Times

Today	Tomorrow
London	8:15pm to 5:40am
Belfast	8:25pm to 5:50am
Birmingham	8:25pm to 5:45am
Manchester	8:30pm to 5:45am
Newcastle	8:32pm to 5:35am
Brighton	8:46pm to 5:43am
Bristol	8:48pm to 5:45am

Air Quality

Yesterday's Readings:

London	Good	O ₃	Good
S. England	Good	Good	Good
Wales	Good	Good	Good
C. England	Good	Good	Good
N. England	Good	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good	Good
N. Ireland	Good		

Outlook for Today:

London	Good	NO ₂	Good
S. England	Good	Good	Good
Wales	Good	Good	Good
C. England	Good	Good	Good
N. England	Good	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good	Good
N. Ireland	Good	Good	Good

High Tides

AM	HT	PM	NT
London	4.49	6.9	17.09
Liverpool	2.01	9.1	14.34
Newcastle	10.13	12.5	22.29
Hull (Albert Dock)	9.09	7.4	21.30
Greenwich	3.25	3.3	15.43
Dun Laoghaire	2.16	9.9	14.49

Sun and Moon

Sun rises: 5:42am
Sun sets: 8:15pm

Moon rises: 8:12am
Moon sets: 8:12am

Full moon: May 22

